

THE LAST YEARS OF CYRUS, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA († 642)*

by Phil BOOTH

In the period *c.* 634–41, an anonymous author sat down to compose a little-known collection of miracles associated with the cult of saints Cyrus and John at Menouthis, east of Alexandria.¹ This collection, excerpted within a single manuscript preserved on Mount Athos, seems to have served as an addendum to the extensive *Miracles of Cyrus and John* which Sophronius, the eminent ascetic and future patriarch of Jerusalem (634–*c.* 639), had composed during his retreat to Alexandria shortly before, in the period *c.* 608–19 (the text itself seems to belong to *c.* 610–4).² The most important contribution to our understanding of this larger, more famous collection is that of Jean Gascoü, whose reflections on the origins of the Menouthis cult have introduced a host of new critical perspectives,³ and whose excellent translation of the text—with its numerous corrections to the critical edition, and its learned elucidation of various difficult passages—is now the starting point for all modern research into Sophronius' text and the cult which it describes.⁴

In this paper I want to reflect not on Sophronius but on his rival, the patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria, with whom Sophronius clashed on doctrinal matters in the summer of 633 and again in 636. The alternative *Miracles of Cyrus and John* with which I began is notable because its opening tale refers, in positive terms, to the patriarch Cyrus, so that the collection itself might be seen to represent a later attempt to dissociate the cult from his rival. But that reference also provides us with a vital clue to Cyrus' status in 633/634, when that tale is set, and thus a precious piece in the puzzle which is his patriarchal career.⁵

* I would like to thank James Howard-Johnston, Marek Jankowiak, and Christian Boudignon for their criticisms of an earlier draft of this piece.

1. Ed. DÉROCHE 2012, with pp. 213–4 for the date (and n. 1, thanking Jean Gascoü for bringing the text to his attention).

2. Ed. MARCOS 1975.

3. GASCOÜ 2007.

4. GASCOÜ 2006.

5. See below n. 20. Note also that a striking divergence between the collections is the absence from the Athos miracles of polemic against anti-Chalcedonians, as per the doctrinal politics of Cyrus as reconstructed here.

That career must be reconstructed from a small number of often conflicting sources, and these continue to inspire competing interpretations among modern commentators.⁶ However these interpretations have not been able to take advantage of the full range of extant evidence. Here I want to reconstitute some important references in the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu, an Egyptian miaphysite bishop active in the late seventh century.⁷ The original text was composed in Coptic, but is now extant only in a seventeenth-century Ethiopic translation of a lost Arabic abbreviation.⁸ The *Chronicle* provides a crucial witness to Cyrus' movements in the period c. 640–2, but that witness has hitherto been misrepresented in the text's modern translations. In several places, the French translation of the editor Hermann Zotenberg—and, following that, the English of Robert Charles—attempted to second guess the text itself, and altered the patriarch's name in Ethiopic (*kirs* vel sim.) to that of the contemporaneous Constantinopolitan patriarch Pyrrhus (*birs* vel sim.).⁹ The conjecture has resulted in much superfluous speculation on Pyrrhus' career;¹⁰ in fact the evidence concerns his counterpart in Alexandria.

This reconstituted evidence does much more than illuminate the movements and activities of Cyrus. For it leads us into fundamental questions concerning the structure and afterlife of John of Nikiu's *Chronicle*—in particular its chapters 116–20, covering the hectic months from the death of Heraclius to the accession of the Constans II (January to November 641)—and the political and religious preoccupations of the leading actors whom those chapters describe.¹¹ Authors both medieval and modern have long recognised that this turbulent period was one of intense factionalism, as the imperial descendants of Heraclius' two wives, Eudocia and Martina, vied for prominence within the imperial college.¹² Less often acknowledged, however, is the production of polemical and apologetic texts which accompanied such rivalries, and the embedding of those texts in later histories (including, I will argue, the *Chronicle*). These texts and others suggest, moreover, that the aforementioned factionalism was informed by far more than the blind ambition, familial pride, or moral disapproval with which some moderns explain it.¹³ For the two parties represented in the sources seem also to have diverged on two pressing issues of the period: first, the proper approach to the armies of an ascendant Islam; and, second, the appropriate response to the perennial problem of dissenters from Chalcedon.

6. For two recent examples: BEIHAMMER 2000a, esp. pp. 17–50; JANKOWIAK 2009, esp. pp. 150–5.

7. See BOOTH 2013b, p. 642 n. 12.

8. For the textual history and the subsequent problems see my comments in BOOTH 2011.

9. ZOTENBERG 1883. CHARLES 1916.

10. See e.g. VAN DIETEN 1972, p. 67 n. 34; MANGO 1990, p. 193.

11. For these dates see below n. 54, n. 180.

12. See e.g. the widespread story that Martina poisoned Heraclius Constantine. For a selection from numerous traditions: Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6132 (ed. de Boor 522), also implicating Pyrrhus; Ps.-Sebeos, *History* 44 (ed. Abgaryan 141); Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.7 (ed. Chabot IV 421); *Chronicle of Seert* 107 (ed. Scher IV 629), attributing the poisoning to “the daughter of his mother.” Cf. VAN DIETEN 1972, p. 71 n. 40.

13. See e.g. GARLAND 1988, pp. 61–72.

FROM TRIBUTE TO TRIAL

At some undesignated point between September 639 and August 640 (“thirteenth indiction”), the inhabitants of the village of Kaminoi in the Arsinoite nome sent to the local pagarch Theodoracius various supplies, “in accordance with the command of our master Cyrus, the most holy and God-honoured patriarch” (κατὰ κέλευσιν τοῦ δεσπότης ἡμῶν Κύρου τοῦ ἁγιοτ[άτ]ου καὶ θεοτιμήτ[ου] πάπα).¹⁴ The document that records the Chalcedonian patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria’s command is important for a number of reasons: first, it provides important insight into the Roman requisitions which were occurring at that time, no doubt in anticipation of the imminent—or, perhaps, ongoing—Muslim invasion (c. 640–2);¹⁵ second, it seems to confirm the dual secular and sacred role which Cyrus had assumed in the 630s, alleged in a number of later sources;¹⁶ and third, it provides a crucial chronological marker for the patriarch’s movements in the later phase of his career. Perhaps our most important source for that phase is the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu. But the relevant sections nevertheless commence after a large chronological lacuna which has expunged the previous three decades (610–c. 639).¹⁷ If we are to contextualise our new readings, therefore, we must first turn to a wider range of sources.

The precise date of Cyrus’ elevation to the throne of Alexandria is unclear.¹⁸ But around 630, in the aftermath of the Sasanian retreat from the Roman Near East, Heraclius had raised him from the see of Phasis in the Caucasus—where the emperor had encountered him in the previous decade¹⁹—to the role of *topotērētēs*, later patriarch, of the Chalcedonian throne of Alexandria,²⁰ vacant since the flight of John the Almsgiver

14. *P.Lond.* I 113.10; with WIPSYCKA 2015, pp. 168–9, and n. 63 for further comment.

15. For these preparations cf. the description of Cyrus’ activities in the apocalypse contained within the (originally) late seventh-century *Arabic Life of Shenoute* (ed. Amélineau I pp. 340–1) which predicts that the “Antichrist” (دجال) [Cyrus] “will construct trenches and fortresses, and order that walls be built around towns in the open country and in the deserts and he will devastate east and west.”

16. See esp. *History of the patriarchs (Vulgate recension)* (ed. Evetts I p. 490); Isaac the Presbyter, *Life of Samuel of Kalamun* 7 (ed. Alcock p. 6); and from Dionysius of Tel Mahre: Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.8 (ed. Chabot IV pp. 422–3); *Anonymous Chronicle to 1234* 118 (ed. Chabot I p. 2512).

17. This occurs between chaps 110 and 111. For comment see below p. 43.

18. The episcopal lists in Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6125–34 (= 619/20–632/3) and Nicephorus, *Chronography* (ed. de Boor p. 129), both give him ten years. It is almost certain that he died at Easter 642 (see below n. 106), but two considerations complicate the calculation of his accession: first, that he was *topotērētēs* before becoming patriarch (below n. 20) and second, that he was deposed for a brief period and replaced with the patriarch George (below pp. 33–4).

19. For Heraclius’ encounter with Cyrus in the Caucasus in 626 see Cyrus, *First letter to Sergius*, and Sergius, *First letter to Honorius* (ed. Riedinger 1990–1992, pp. 534–6, 588–92); with JANKOWIAK 2009, pp. 40–4 for the date and circumstances.

20. That Cyrus held this position (which his contemporaneous counterpart in Jerusalem, Sergius of Joppa, also held) in the summer of 633 is confirmed in the *Pact of Union* (ed. Riedinger 1990–1992 pp. 594–600, at 594; with JANKOWIAK 2009, pp. 89–90). It seems also to be confirmed in the *Anonymous Miracles of Cyrus and John* 1–3 (ed. Déroche p. 201) where in 633/4 (τῆς βασιλείας Ἡρακλείου τοῦ πανευσεβοῦς ἔτους εἰκοστοῦ τετάρτου) the text speaks of τῆς Ἀλεξανδρῶν ἁγίας τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας Κύρου κατέχοντος τὰ πηδάλια, not suggestive of full patriarchal status. It is probable that Cyrus became patriarch soon after the union; he is described as such in Sergius, *First letter to Honorius* (ed. Riedinger 1990–1992, pp. 534–6), dated to late 634/early 635.

during the Persian invasion of 619.²¹ The move formed part of a wider imperial attempt to appoint to the most prominent sees supporters of the doctrine of monenergism, which the emperor and his allies hoped might heal the enduring doctrinal rift which had resulted from the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Indeed, in the summer of 633, Cyrus presided over the reintegration within the Chalcedonian communion of the leaders of the Egyptian Severan church (or “Theodosians”).²² Although later Coptic texts would present that union as the result of inducement or violence, and cast Cyrus in the role of grand persecutor, the same texts nevertheless point to the remarkable success of the patriarch’s initiative,²³ and the accusation of persecution no doubt functions, at least in part, as a fig-leaf for later miaphysite discomfort at the union, and as a convenient pretext through which to reintegrate “lapsed” communities or their leaders.²⁴ Despite this later regret, the unionist spirit amongst Egypt’s Severans was not an isolated phenomenon, but appears as part of a much wider pattern through which contemporaneous anti-Chalcedonian leaders across the Near and Middle East—liberated from Persian occupation, and confronted with the triumphant emperor’s attempts to realise a new rapprochement—submitted to those initiatives which elevated the shared communion of Christians above subtle differences over doctrine.²⁵

That success was nevertheless to prove ephemeral. As the unionists were celebrating in Alexandria, the warriors of Arabia, galvanised under the banner of a new monotheism, were beginning to press into the Roman Near East, shattering the brief period of peace and casting into doubt—from both Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian perspectives—divine approval for the new doctrinal unions. Cyrus’ activities in subsequent years are difficult to discern: in the sacred sphere, fleeting glimpses in scattered sources afford some sense of his continued involvement in, and defence of, imperial doctrinal politics;²⁶ but in the secular, a confluence of various texts permits a more comprehensive picture of his efforts to postpone a looming Muslim invasion of his province. From the beginning

21. For the circumstances of John’s flight see BOOTH 2013a, pp. 100–4, with n. 50.

22. See the various documents embedded in the *Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council* (ed. Riedinger 1990–1992): *Pact of Union* (pp. 594–600); Cyrus of Alexandria, *First letter to Sergius* (pp. 588–92); Sergius of Constantinople, *Letter to Honorius* (pp. 534–46); also Maximus Confessor, *Opusculum* 12 (ed. PG 91 col. 143C–D).

23. See *History of the patriarchs (Vulgate recension)* (ed. Evetts I pp. 490–7); Isaac the Presbyter, *Life of Samuel of Kalamun* 7–9.

24. For similar doubts as to the extent of persecution cf. WINKELMANN 1979, pp. 170–5. A perhaps parallel apologetic accusation of conversion-through-persecution occurs with reference to Syria, where Heraclius’ initiative also had evident success amongst certain monastic communities; see Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.3 (ed. Chabot IV pp. 408–10).

25. For details BOOTH 2013a, pp. 200–8.

26. See esp. George of Resh’aina, *Life of Maximus Confessor* 8, 10, 12, 14 (ed. Brock, pp. 305–7). Cf. also Cyrus of Alexandria, *Third letter to Sergius of Constantinople* (ed. Riedinger 1984, p. 172). The latter describes how “the most glorious general Eustathius” brought to Cyrus Sergius’ letters, which contained a copy of the *Ekthesis*, of which Cyrus expresses his approval, and which is to be ratified by the pope-elect Severinus. On internal logic the latter, which is addressed to Sergius (d. Dec. 638) and refers to the death of Honorius (Oct. 638), must date to November 638 or soon after; see WINKELMANN 2001, p. 87. But since Sergius somehow already knows the name of Honorius’ successor Severinus, and has had the time also to relay this to Cyrus, there are some serious questions over authenticity or interpolation (perhaps Severinus’ name, perhaps Sergius’); cf. JANKOWIAK 2009, pp. 155–60.

of 634 Egypt's inhabitants were confronted with the ominous presence of Muslim raiders in southern Palestine, and following two major Roman defeats in southern Syria in the summer of 636, an invasion must have seemed imminent. That collection of later sources which depend on a lost eighth-century common source sometimes attributed to Theophilus of Edessa—henceforth, the “eastern source”—indeed report that the Muslims now launched an expedition against Egypt, but that the patriarch Cyrus was able to postpone full-scale invasion for three years through agreeing an annual tribute of 200,000 gold coins.²⁷ Although this tradition continues to have its doubters,²⁸ it is not improbable: the reported tribute is the same annual amount that Heraclius is said to have given the Avars after 623,²⁹ and the dependents of the eastern source also present a parallel case in northern Mesopotamia, where the official John Caetas, in the period c. 638, is said to have fended off Muslim aggression through negotiating an annual tribute of 100,000 solidi.³⁰ Moreover, the tradition of a tribute finds independent confirmation both in the *History of the patriarchs of Alexandria*, which also reports that Heraclius deferred an imminent invasion through the payment of tribute, here reckoned at eight years,³¹ and in Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam’s ninth-century *Conquest of Egypt*, which describes an initial pact of tribute with Egypt’s eastern inhabitants before the invasion of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ.³²

In the dependents of the eastern source, the report concerning John Caetas ends with his deposition, exile, and replacement with a man called Ptolemy—in Agapius, we note, the place of John’s exile is specified as Africa—and serves as a precursor to the parallel fate of the patriarch Cyrus.³³ After three years, the same sources state, the patriarch was accused of surrendering the wealth of Egypt to the Muslims and (in the more extensive

27. See Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6126 (noting, however, that in de Boor’s edition [338] this information has been retrotranslated from the ninth-century Latin translation of Theophanes by Anastasius Bibliothecarius); Agapius, *Universal history* (ed. Vasiliev III pp. 471–4); Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.7 (ed. Chabot IV p. 419); *Chronicle to 1234* 118 (ed. Chabot I p. 252). Cf. also the helpful collation of the sources in HOYLAND 2011, pp. 109–14. For the potential attribution to Theophilus see the papers of Hoyland, Debié, and Conterno in JANKOWIAK & MONTINARO 2015.

28. See BEIHAMMER 2000a, pp. 27–8; 2000b, p. 221; following BUTLER 1902, pp. 207–9, 481–3.

29. See Nicephorus, *Short history* 13; for the same Avar tribute, and for the seizures of ecclesiastical plate which seem to have contributed to it, cf. *ibid.* 11 and Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6111, 6113.

30. See Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6128; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.7 (ed. Chabot IV p. 420) and *Chronicle to 1234* 121 (ed. Chabot I p. 256) also call the official “the general John.” Agapius, *Universal history* (ed. Vasiliev III p. 476) has the same vignette but calls the official “the patrician Paul” (بولس), which HOYLAND 2011 p. 119 n. 277 regards as a simple mistake for “John” (ايونس). The date of this event is unclear, but see BEIHAMMER 2000b, pp. 186–7. John’s precise role is not known; see BRANDES 2002, pp. 650–3.

31. See *History of the patriarchs* (ed. Evetts I p. 493). Note however that Evetts has without explanation altered the manuscripts from “eight” (ثمان) to “three” (ثلاث) years, perhaps to bring the tradition into line with that of other texts. For the realisation of the tribute see also HOYLAND 1997, pp. 574–90.

32. Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Torrey p. 53): “Then Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddiq ... sent out Ḥatib to al-Muqawqas in Egypt, and he passed the region of the villages of the east and concluded a truce with them. They gave him [tribute] and did not stop doing that until ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ entered and they fought him and violated that covenant.” On the Muslim presence in Egypt in the 630s see also HOYLAND 1997, pp. 579–80.

33. Agapius, *Universal history* (ed. Vasiliev p. 476).

comment of Agapius) of giving them taxes owed to the fisc. Cyrus was then replaced with an Armenian called Manuel, and when the Muslim emissaries came to collect the annual tribute Manuel refused. As a consequence the Muslims invaded the province, routed Manuel, and forced his retreat to Alexandria.³⁴ None of the dependents of the eastern source here provides dates for this sequence of events, and all position that sequence between Heraclius' withdrawal from Syria (in late 636) and the surrender of Jerusalem (c. 638).³⁵ However since it must have extended over at least three years, we can perhaps infer that the period from late 636–late 639 indicates the period of tribute, and that Cyrus' subsequent removal occurred in 640.

Further evidence for Cyrus' fate is encountered in the late eighth-century *Short history* of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Nicephorus. In the first part of his text—which extends from chapters 1–32—Nicephorus seems to depend on a single source covering events from the accession of Heraclius in 610 to the ordination of Paul of Constantinople in late 641, before the text breaks off and a brief sentence on the death of Constans in 668 leaps us into the reign of Constantine IV, no doubt for want of information on Constans' reign.³⁶ That source focuses on affairs in Constantinople, where it was no doubt composed, and appears to have been written soon after the events described (a point to which we shall return). It draws from a number of probable sources, including official notes and personal recollections, and becomes more reliable as it approaches the end, and thus also the lifetime of the author. It is impossible to be sure of the extent to which Nicephorus has altered that source, but his wider method suggests that his activities as editor were limited to the rewriting and redaction of material, rather than its rearrangement.³⁷ There are numerous modern titles for this text, but for convenience, and nothing more, let us call it the *History to 641*.

Amidst its chapters on the 630s, the *History* includes two separate vignettes on Cyrus and the attempted defence of Egypt. In the first we are informed that “while Heraclius was in the eastern parts (ἐν τοῖς ἀνατολικοῖς μέρεσι)” he sent a general (στρατηγός), John of Barcaina, “against the Saracens in Egypt,” and that he was killed in battle; “likewise,” we are told, “Marinus, commander of the Thracian contingents (ὁ τῶν Θρακικῶν ἐκστρατευμάτων ἡγεμὼν), engaged them in battle and was defeated.” The text reports that Heraclius now conferred command upon the general and *cubicularius* Marianus, and dispatched him to consult with Cyrus so that the pair might plan some “common action” against the Saracens. Cyrus then informed him, however, that he intended to reach an agreement with the Muslim commander ‘Amr, and to provide “tribute which, he stated,

34. See Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6126; Agapius, *Universal history* (Vasiliev III pp. 472–3); Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.7 (ed. Chabot IV p. 419); *Chronicle to 1234* 118 (ed. Chabot I pp. 252–3).

35. For the latter date see BOOTH 2013a, pp. 241–4.

36. Note however that Nicephorus' first chapter is a summation of the *Excerpta de insidiis* 110, attributed to “John of Antioch” but perhaps the work of a continuator (for this debate over the extent of John of Antioch's original *Chronicle* see e.g. VAN NUFFELEN 2012). It is possible therefore that Nicephorus has added this initial chapter (taken from John of Antioch or his continuator) to a second source covering chaps 2–32; see MANGO 1990, pp. 13–4; HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, p. 248.

37. For these arguments see esp. MANGO 1990, pp. 12–4 (calling Nicephorus' source a chronicle); HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, pp. 242–56 (calling the source “the second continuation of John of Antioch”); ZUCKERMAN 2013, pp. 208–9 (calling the source the “Pyrrhos pamphlet”).

he would raise by a commercial levy, while the imperial taxes would not be affected (ἐπὶ τελέμασιν ... ἃ δὴ καὶ ὑπέχειν δι' ἐμπολαίου συνεισφορᾶς ἐσήμαινε, τὰ δὲ τῷ βασιλεῖ παρεχόμενα ἀδιάπτωτα μένειν).” According to the *History*, Cyrus also recommended that the empress Eudocia or another of Heraclius’ daughters be offered in marriage to ‘Amr, with a view to the latter’s conversion. Heraclius, however, is said to have refused the patriarch’s advice, and Marianus then confronted the Muslims and was defeated and killed.³⁸ Note, therefore, that here the period of tribute is not realised.

In subsequent chapters the *History* turns to the emperor’s return from the east, his self-imposed isolation in the Hieria Palace, and the coronation of the Caesar Heraclonas as emperor. The text then reports the death of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Sergius and the elevation of his successor Pyrrhus (in late 638), before reporting that “some years previously” (ἥδη χρόνους τισὶ πρότερον) Heraclius had recalled Cyrus to the capital, and in a public trial “held him under severe accusation of having surrendered to the Saracens the affairs of all Egypt.” The patriarch however defends himself, arguing “that if his plan had gone forward and he had raised taxes for the Saracens by means of trade profit, the latter would have remained in peace and the imperial dues would not have been in arrears (εἰ ἡ βουλὴ αὐτοῦ προухώρει καὶ ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς ἡσύχαζον, καὶ τὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ παρεχόμενα οὐ καθυστερίζοιτο).” In turn he accused others of committing the crimes with which he was charged, but Heraclius disregarded his pleas, called him a pagan for recommending the marriage of his daughter to ‘Amr, and handed him to the urban prefect for an unspecified punishment.³⁹ Thereafter, the text moves to describe the emperor’s death, and we hear no more of the patriarch’s sentence.

How should we understand the *History*’s evidence? The text suggests that at least two forces were dispatched to defend Egypt “while Heraclius was in the eastern parts,” that is, before his retreat from the Near East following defeats in the summer of 636. Although this has been discounted on the grounds that Egypt was not invaded until c. 640, it is not impossible. A text which purports to describe the trial of Maximus Confessor, in 655, states that in 633 Heraclius had ordered Peter, the στρατηγὸς of Numidia, “to take an army and depart for Egypt against the Saracens.”⁴⁰ The reported mobilisation of the στρατηγὸς “John of Barcaina” (i.e. from Barca in the North African Pentapolis) and the Thracian ἡγεμὼν Marinus might therefore be seen as part of a wider imperial initiative of the period c. 633–4, as the Muslims overran Palestine, to redeploy troops and prevent the loss of Egypt, the empire’s most precious resource.⁴¹

The dispatch and defeat of the *cubicularius* Marianus is more difficult to place. The implication is that it occurred at some chronological remove from the previous campaigns, with intervening exchanges between Alexandria and Constantinople, before Marianus’ failed expedition. Could this Marianus be the same person as the eastern source’s Manuel? That a general called Marianus did indeed confront the Muslims in Egypt is perhaps

38. Nicephorus, *Short history* 23 (ed. and transl. Mango pp. 71–3).

39. Nicephorus, *Short history* 26 (ed. and transl. Mango pp. 74–7).

40. *Record of the Trial* I. 30 (ed. Allen & Neil 1999, p. 15). The text states that this command occurred “twenty-two years ago (πρὸ εἰκοσιδύο ἐτῶν).” Since Maximus’ trial occurred in 655 (ed. Allen & Neil 2002, p. 35) this would place the reported action at some point in 633.

41. Note that this “John of Barcaina” appears to be distinct from the John “head of the forces” whose death is reported in John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 111, 116; cf. BOOTH 2013b p. 649 n. 37.

confirmed in the *History of the patriarchs* which, in a description of ‘Amr’s campaign before the conquest of Alexandria, refers to the defeat of “the patrician (بطريق) Aryānūs,” perhaps a corruption of “Marianus.”⁴² Could “Manuel” also be a later corruption of Marianus?⁴³ Their reported relations with Cyrus—in which a more hawkish general replaces the more pacific patriarch, who is then recalled—are, of course, almost identical, and while their identification must remain unclear a later Arabic tradition contains the slightest hint of corroboration. This tradition, which relates to a supposed “second conquest” of Alexandria in c. 645–7, appears in a range of later texts.⁴⁴ It describes, with some variations, how the “Romans” under Manuel (منويل) sailed to Alexandria, which then rebelled against Muslim rule, prompting ‘Amr to reconquer it. The date varies: Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, for example, places the event in AH 25 (28th October 645–17th October 646);⁴⁵ Balādhurī puts it in either AH 23 (November 19th 643–November 7th 644) or 25 (while also making Heraclius Constantine its genius);⁴⁶ whereas Agapius seems to have 646/7.⁴⁷ Following Alfred Butler, most moderns have accepted the tradition of a Roman reoccupation in 645/6 (or 646/7), although it does not appear in non-Arabic sources,⁴⁸ and rehearses a recognised cliché of Arabic *futūḥ* literature, that is, a legalistic debate concerning the conditions under which individual cities surrendered—whether by treaty or by force—and the subsequent duplication of conquest stories in order to satisfy both explanations.⁴⁹ (Some Egyptian Arabic sources, in fact, describe another “second conquest” of Alexandria in the immediate aftermath of the first.)⁵⁰ Moreover, the tale of the Roman resurgence under Manuel is an almost exact replica of the narrative embedded in the dependents of the eastern source, where it is instead associated with the cessation of Roman tribute, and the opening of hostilities, at the end of Heraclius’ reign. One might suspect, therefore, that the same narrative unit has in Arabic texts been detached from its original context and reassigned so as to create an academically convenient, but phantom, second conquest of Alexandria.⁵¹

Or the one who
Theodore
replaced
Domentianus with
as decurion

42. *History of the patriarchs* (ed. Evetts I p. 494). Note that Evetts has again altered the mss so as to read مار يانوس (*māryānus*), no doubt once more to bring the evidence into line with that of other sources (cf. n. 31 above).

43. Cf. SPECK 1988, pp. 400–1, who suggests instead that “Marianus” or “Marinus” in Nicephorus is a corruption of an unreadable “Manuel” (so also HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, p. 262).

44. See CAETANI 1905–1926, VII pp. 103–19 (for the most part offering AH 25 for the date).

45. See Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Torrey pp. 175–8).

46. Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān* (ed. de Goeje pp. 221–2).

47. Agapius, *History* (ed. Vasiliev III p. 479). Agapius makes Manuel’s expedition simultaneous with the Muslim expedition against North Africa, which he seems to place in ‘Uthmān’s second year and Constans’ sixth (i.e. 646/7).

48. BUTLER 1902, pp. 465–83. The event is embedded in modern historiography but for a recent example see HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, pp. 153–4, with n. 55. The latter attempts to link with this supposed event a report of an imminent campaign against the Arabs in the *Anonymous Miracles of St Demetrius* 4.232 (ed. Lemerle I p. 209); for doubts cf. JANKOWIAK 2013a, p. 287.

49. See e.g. DONNER 1998, p. 171.

50. See e.g. Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Torrey p. 80); Eutychius, *Annals (Alexandrian recension)* 32 (ed. Breydy p. 147). Cf. CAETANI 1905–1926, IV pp. 265–6 (who thinks the tale is a topos and thus inauthentic).

51. Pace BEIHAMMER 2000b, p. 221; HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, p. 214, who instead suggests the inverse, that the eastern source has conflated the conquest of ‘Amr with the supposed Roman counterattack in 645/6 (or 646/7).

Whatever the solution, for our immediate purposes it is also striking that these Arabic sources describe Manuel as “the eunuch” (الخصي). Although this too might represent a later elaboration of, or assumption within, the Arabic tradition, Nicephorus’ Marianus must also have been a eunuch, since he is described as *cubicularius*. The identification of the pair, therefore, is uncertain but not inconceivable.

It is possible that the two blocks of material concerning Cyrus within the *History to 641* constituted, in their original form, a short, continuous narrative relating the campaigns in Egypt and the patriarch’s associated fall-from-grace, which the author of the *History to 641* has then integrated within his wider scheme.⁵² As we have seen above, however, this narrative also makes clear that a considerable lapse of time separated the first campaigns in Egypt (sent while Heraclius is in the East) and Cyrus’ trial in the capital (in the emperor’s presence), and the *History* has thus divided the material into two halves, framing the trial with further events which contain several chronological indicators: on one side, the elevation of Heraclonas to the rank of Augustus (known to have occurred in July 638) and death of Sergius and election of his successor (known to have occurred in December 638);⁵³ and, on the other, the final illness and death of Heraclius (in January, perhaps February, 641).⁵⁴ Although the account of the trial has therefore been firmly situated in the context of events *c.* 639–41, the text states that it occurred “some years previously.” Why then has it not been reported along with earlier events? As we have seen, the dependents of the eastern source also suggest that the deposition of Cyrus occurred in this same period (*c.* 639/40), and without the qualification ἡδη χρόνοις τισὶ πρότερον we are presented with a rather neat confluence of evidence. Indeed, later in the text, as we shall see, the *History* will claim that Cyrus was restored under Heraclonas, so that if his trial occurred “some years” before the death of Sergius, then his disgrace would, on this witness, have extended from *c.* 636–41, which is impossible given the aforementioned document which places him in Egypt at some point in 639/40.⁵⁵ The most expedient solution, therefore, is perhaps to regard that qualification as a misguided addition of Nicephorus himself, who perceived the connections between the two accounts but not the chronological grounds for separating them.⁵⁶

52. Cf. on this “Kyros-geschichte” SPECK 1988, pp. 398–403, 410–2.

53. Heraclonas’ elevation: *Book of ceremonies* 2.27 (ed. Reiske pp. 627–8). Death of Sergius: *Book of ceremonies* 2.30; Nicephorus, *Chronography* (ed. de Boor p. 118), with VAN DIETEN 1972, p. 56.

54. On the authority of the *Chronicon Altitate*, GRIERSON 1962, p. 48 places Heraclius’ death on January 11 (followed by TREADGOLD 1990, p. 432). Nevertheless it must be noted that several independent sources, including the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu, suggest February; see below n. 81.

55. See above n. 14.

56. Cf. SPECK 1988, p. 410 n. 910 (followed in BEIHAMMER 2000a, pp. 30–1; also HOYLAND 1997, p. 590): “Das ist chronologische Phantasie des Nikeph., der sich bemüht, hier den zweiten Teil ... der Geschichte des Kyros anzubringen.” Another possibility is that the author of the *History* attempts to remove Cyrus’ trial from the patriarchate of Pyrrhus as part of an apologetic scheme (cf. below pp. 10–1), but in this case we must still wonder at its simultaneous retention amongst later events. Note that JANKOWIAK 2009, pp. 150–5, uses the chronological qualification “some years previously” to argue that Cyrus was exiled in the period 636–9. But, besides the simultaneous placement of the trial in a later context in Nicephorus’ source, this leaves several problems: first that Cyrus was exiled despite his plan of tribute being adopted (a tradition which Jankowiak accepts, and which gives him his three-year period); second that his restoration occurred when the same plan was then abandoned (inverting the witness of the dependents of the eastern source); and third that he was back in the

A problem nevertheless remains in the conspicuous failure of the *History* to indicate the realisation of the period of tribute. As we have seen, the dependents of the eastern source and the *History of the patriarchs of Alexandria* both suggest that tribute was indeed paid for an extended period; and even on the internal logic of Nicephorus' source, it is difficult to comprehend the patriarch's recall to Constantinople, since the subsequent Muslim invasion in fact vindicated the advice which he had offered. In order to explain this, let us first examine the text's narrative for the political convulsions of 641. This describes the final illness of Heraclius, the failed attempts to Martina to claim seniority over his designated successors, Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas, and Philagrius the *sacellarius*' seizure of monies which Heraclius had entrusted to Pyrrhus for the support of Martina.⁵⁷ It then reports that Philagrius feared reprisals should Heraclius Constantine die, and advised him to dispatch a large amount of gold to the soldiers, summoning them to protect the interests of his own children, and entrusting this business to Valentine, "the aide (ὑπασπιστής) of Philagrius."⁵⁸ When Heraclius Constantine passed, Heraclonas at once reinstated Cyrus of Alexandria, exiled Philagrius to North Africa, and then launched a persecution of his allies. Upon this development, Valentine marched to Chalcedon, while Heraclonas in the capital swore to protect Heraclius Constantine's eldest son Heraclius (i.e. the future emperor Constans II), and even crossed the Bosphorus with Heraclius-Constans in a failed effort to convince Valentine that he intended his nephew no harm. When Valentine did not desist, the people pressured the patriarch Pyrrhus to appoint Heraclius-Constans as emperor, to which Heraclonas consented. Then, the text reports, an armed mob of ruffians, Jews, and unbelievers attempted to apprehend the patriarch, who as a consequence laid his pallium aside, and sailed to Carthage. At this, Martina and Heraclonas decided to come to terms with Valentine and bestowed upon him the title *comes excubitorum*, promising forgiveness to his soldiers, elevating to the rank of emperor the Caesar David (renamed Tiberius), and appointing one Paul as patriarch of Constantinople, in October of the fifteenth indiction (641).⁵⁹ At this point, the narrative leaps to the end of Constans' reign, leaving the fates of Heraclonas and Martina unclear.⁶⁰

It has long been recognised that the author of the *History* is an admirer of the patriarch Pyrrhus, whose resignation is here presented as the product of the machinations of a lawless mob of assorted ne'er do wells.⁶¹ As Constantin Zuckerman has recently argued, the

province in 639/40 (as witnessed in *P.Lond.* I 113.10) only to be soon exiled again and restored under Heraclonas (as said in John of Nikiu and indeed in Nicephorus).

57. Nicephorus, *Short history* 29 (ed. Mango p. 78) calls Philagrius τῶν βασιλικῶν χρημάτων ταμία, for which read imperial *sacellarius*; see *PLRE* IIIB Philagrius 3 (and 6?); *PmbZ* Philagrius 6124; BRANDES 2002, pp. 427–9. He appears to have been *sacellarius* at the end of Heraclius' reign, when Theodore Skutariotes, *Synopsis Chronikē* (ed. Sathas VII p. 110) has one "Philagrius *cubicularius* and *sacellarius*" conducting a census; see KÆGI 1992, pp. 256–8; BRANDES 2002, pp. 428–9, 459–60.

58. Nicephorus, *Short history* 28.

59. The precise date was the 1st October, as established in BROOKS 1897, at p. 46.

60. Nicephorus, *Short history* 29–32. On David-Tiberius see below n. 92–3. His appointment to the rank of Augustus was no doubt considered a counterweight to the elevation of Heraclius-Constans (and, perhaps, the price paid for the deposition of Pyrrhus).

61. MANGO 1990, p. 11; developed in ZUCKERMAN 2013, pp. 206–9, "Heraclius and the Holy Cross;" and now C. BOUDIGNON (forthcoming). It does appear that Pyrrhus resigned, rather than being deposed; see VAN DIETEN 1972, pp. 72–5.

report of that resignation—in which the patriarch disowns his office without renouncing it—appears conscious of Pyrrhus' later attempts at reinstatement, that is, his aspiration in the 650s to resume the patriarchal throne, realised for a brief period in 654.⁶² This suggests, therefore, that its author was writing well after the end of the text itself;⁶³ but it might also explain the otherwise discordant ending of the *History*, which culminates not in the accession of Constans II as sole emperor, as one might expect from a historian of that emperor's reign, but rather in the election in October 641 of Pyrrhus' successor Paul, the man he aspired to replace.

In another recent paper Christian Boudignon has reached similar conclusions,⁶⁴ and also pointed to wider features of the *History* which complement Zuckerman's analysis: first, a consistent celebration of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Sergius, Pyrrhus' predecessor and reported friend;⁶⁵ second, an overt and pervasive opposition to Heraclius' second marriage, to his niece Martina (including Sergius' denunciation of it);⁶⁶ and, third, a simultaneous celebration of Heraclius Constantine.⁶⁷ It is in fact quite evident that the patriarch Pyrrhus was a close associate of Martina and her sons. But the apologetic *History to 641*—which derives from the circle of the patriarch, perhaps even from the man himself, when he was seeking reinstatement in the period c. 650—attempts to obfuscate this fact, and to appeal to the court of Constans II, son of Heraclius Constantine and opponent of Martina.

There seems little doubt that the *Short history's* evidence for the later career of Cyrus belongs to this same ideological programme (and is thus integral to the original *History*, even if derived or elaborated from a separate source).⁶⁸ Thus the apologetic celebration of the Constantinopolitan patriarchs, and the sometimes ambiguous attitude towards the emperor Heraclius, find a parallel in the reports on the fate of Cyrus where, as we have seen, the patriarch is prosecuted for suggesting both a tribute for the Muslims and a political marriage of 'Amr and an imperial daughter. There is a patent attempt here to

62. ZUCKERMAN 2013, p. 207; *contra* MANGO 1990, p. 14. For Pyrrhus' reinstatement see Nicephorus, *Chronography* (ed. de Boor p. 118); Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6145; Theodore Spudeaus, *Narrations* 32.

63. Suggested also in the fleeting reference to Pyrrhus' disputation with Maximus at Carthage in 645; see *Short history* 31 (reading "Thalassius" for "Theodosius"?).

64. BOUDIGNON (forthcoming).

65. See esp. *Short history* 2 and 11 (also 12, 18, 26, 31).

66. *Ibid.* 11 (dwelling on the disabilities of Martina's first two children, and Sergius' admonition of the emperor); 20 (Heraclius' brother criticises his marriage); 27 (Heraclius' final illness ascribed to his marriage).

67. Following MANGO 1985, p. 105, Boudignon points to the fact that *Short history* 5 and 17 reports but does not criticise the (also incestuous, if less so) marriage of Heraclius Constantine to Gregoria, his second cousin and Constans' mother. To this however we might add the obvious attempt therein to obfuscate the fact that Gregoria's father Niketas was Heraclius' cousin—he is called nothing more than *patrikios*, and his intimacy with the emperor explained as a result of their children's betrothal (*ibid.* 5). We might also add that Heraclius Constantine and Sergius are twice presented as intimates (*ibid.* 5, 13)—perhaps as an archetype for the desired relationship of Constans and Pyrrhus—and that one otherwise digressive anecdote dwells on the dangers of dishonouring the deceased but revered Eudocia, Heraclius' first wife and Constans' grandmother (*ibid.* 3).

68. Cf. SPECK 1988, pp. 401–3, 411–2, who suggests that Cyrus' advice of marriage and the attempted conversion of 'Amr is an interpolation within the text's original source.

present the charges aimed at Cyrus as, at best, misguided and, at worst, disingenuous. For the reader, upon encountering this report, is conscious that the emperor Heraclius himself, a few chapters earlier, has approved the baptism of prominent “Huns,”⁶⁹ and offered his daughter Eudocia to the western Turkic khagan;⁷⁰ that he has paid an expensive tribute to the Avars to prevent their aggression;⁷¹ and that his cancellation of the commercial dues owed to the “Saracens” has precipitated the Muslim invasion of the Levant.⁷²

We might therefore wonder whether the obfuscation of the period of tribute orchestrated through the patriarch of Alexandria—of which the author of the *History to 641*, a contemporary, cannot have been unaware—is not a further component of the wider apologetic scheme. As we have seen, from a range of sources it seems evident that after a period of initial Muslim raiding and Roman defeat concomitant with the conquest of Palestine (c. 633–6), the patriarch Cyrus had championed a period of appeasement which witnessed an annual tribute paid over three years to the Muslims (c. 636–9?). In the late reign of Heraclius (640?), however, it seems that this tribute came to be regarded as counter-productive, or as an excessive drain on imperial revenues, and its architect was thus deposed and recalled to the capital under charges of treason. The *History to 641* echoes this same narrative in its central details, presenting Cyrus’ advice as the continuation of recent, successful, attempts at Roman client management, but at the same time suppressing the realisation of the controversial tribute. The motivation, it seems, was more than a simple desire to protect the patriarchal dignity, or to expose the insincerity of the patriarch’s prosecution. For in 641, as we shall see, Pyrrhus had also aligned himself with those who advocated peace, and the renewal of tribute, with the Muslims.⁷³ Through characterising the downfall of Cyrus as the result of duplicitous and counter-productive machinations in the capital, therefore, the author of the *History to 641* perhaps wished to suggest to the reader a parallel with the eventual fate of Pyrrhus; but also, in pointing to Cyrus’ eventual vindication and reinstatement, to which we now turn, to provide a recent precedent for Pyrrhus’ own desired exculpation.

THE REINSTATEMENT AND DOUBLE DEATH OF CYRUS

Cyrus’ political isolation cannot have lasted long. The dependents of the eastern source report that after the aforementioned defeat of the Armenian Manuel, Heraclius dispatched Cyrus to travel to “the camp of the Saracens,” there to request the renewal of their former tribute—the Muslims, however, now established as conquerors of the province, refused the Roman offer.⁷⁴ In contrast, the *History to 641* embedded in Nicephorus

69. *Short history* 9. Cf. below n. 110.

70. See *Short history* 12. For this event cf. ZUCKERMAN 1995a. For Cyrus’ suggestion in the context of late Roman client management, see MORELLI 2010, pp. 148–9.

71. *Short history* 13.

72. *Ibid.* 20. For a similar anecdote cf. Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6123.

73. In this context note also the extended celebration of diplomacy and peace expressed in the context of the Romano-Persian war, at *Short history* 6.

74. Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6126; Agapius, *Universal history* (ed. Vasiliev III pp. 472–4); Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.7 (ed. Chabot IV p. 419). The *Chronicle to 1234* 118 does not speak of Cyrus’ restoration.

ends its narrative of the patriarch's trial with his committal to the urban prefect for (an unspecified) punishment, but a later chapter claims that he was restored to Alexandria soon after Heraclonas ascended the throne as sole emperor (which seems to have occurred in April 641).⁷⁵

This tradition of Cyrus' exile and reinstatement finds some important corroboration in our reconstituted evidence from the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu. The *Chronicle*'s final chapters (111–20), in which that evidence appears, are focused on the Muslim conquest of Egypt, after the aforesaid chronological lacuna covering 610–c. 639. The *Chronicle*, unlike the *History to 641* embedded in Nicephorus, does not describe the deposition of Cyrus; nor the associated campaign of Marianus/Manuel. When the conquest section commences, however, Cyrus seems already to be absent from his province: he does not appear in those chapters (111–5) which detail the first Muslim manoeuvres within Middle Egypt and the Delta; and chapter 116, as we shall see below, seems to place him in Constantinople upon the death of Heraclius.⁷⁶ (The *Chronicle*, we should also note, provides no support for the common modern notion, derived from later Arabic sources, that Cyrus had met 'Amr at a first rendezvous at Babylon in October 640.)⁷⁷ It seems probable, therefore, that the *Chronicle* (or its source) once contained a description of Cyrus' disgrace, before the imposition of the lacuna. Moreover, given that the patriarch's reinstatement here occurs, as we shall see, for the explicit purpose of negotiating a peace

75. Nicephorus, *Short history* 26, 30. *Ibid.* 29 (with MANGO 1990, p. 192) gives Heraclius Constantine 103 days, which on the text's internal chronology would place his death on 24th May (from the death of Heraclius on February 11th). John of Nikiu also implies a date in May or June, giving Heraclius Constantine 100 days from February (below p. 14). The *Necrologium* embedded in the *Chronicon Altitate*, on the other hand, gives the emperor 120 days, although the stated date of his death is then given as April 20th, which would be 100 days (counting from the stated death of Heraclius on January, 11th). On the suggestion of certain textual corruptions, GRIERSON 1962, p. 49 and TREADGOLD 1990, p. 432, suggest that Heraclius Constantine died on April 23rd, after a reign of 103 days.

76. Note also the hint that Cyrus had been in Egypt until a point quite late within the chronological range of the lacuna. Within chapter 120 (ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 212), upon Cyrus' return to Alexandria, we read of "a cross which he took from the official (*masfān*) John before his exile." This seems to refer to an event which appeared earlier in the (now lost) text. It is tempting to identify this "John" with the John "leader of the forces" (*rə'sa' aḥzāb* vel sim.) who appears in the opening chapter of the *Chronicle*'s conquest narrative (111), who has died in a lost section of preceding narrative, and who seems to have been an imperial appointee from Constantinople (*ibid.* 116). But he is not there called *masfān*. Another option is Nicephorus' John of Barcaina, which would then place Cyrus' reception of the cross much earlier; cf. n. 41 above.

77. Following BUTLER 1902, pp. 250–64, 544–5, who depended on later Arabic sources, it is common to suppose that Cyrus was exiled after negotiating terms with 'Amr during the siege of Babylon, in November 640, and then relating those terms to Heraclius, who did not accept them (see e.g. BEIHAMMER 2000a, pp. 33–6; 2000b, pp. 210–30, esp. 222–7). But the shared narrative of Nicephorus and the dependents of the eastern source is that the Muslim invasion is subsequent on Cyrus' deposition, not in anticipation of it. In John of Nikiu there is no suggestion of some initial meeting, and the patriarch seems absent when 'Amr first invades (cf. BOOTH 2013b, pp. 656–9). The event, moreover, is an obvious duplicate for the actual meeting of the pair, which seems to have occurred under Heraclonas—see *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 213), where Cyrus wishes to report the meeting "to the emperor Heraclius" = Heraclonas—and thus at some point between late September, when the patriarch arrived, and the emperor's fall in November (cf. n. 102, 180). See also HOYLAND 1997, pp. 581–2.

with ‘Amr, we might perhaps also assume that the same description, like the other sources we have studied, presented Cyrus as the architect of Muslim appeasement.

I have argued elsewhere that chapters 111–115 offer a coherent narrative describing the initial Muslim campaign, involving two Muslim forces converging on the fortress at Babylon, at the apex of the Delta, from the south and northeast.⁷⁸ Chapters 116–20, however, present a series of problems. Perhaps most striking of all, the *Chronicle* contains *two* traditions concerning Cyrus’ recall (in chapters 116 and 119) and *two* accounts of his death (both in chapter 120). Let us first examine the two accounts of Cyrus’ recall. The first of these has hitherto been obscured from historians, due to the unfortunate decision of Hermann Zotenberg twice to translate *kirs* within the Ethiopic (ክርስ i.e. Arabic قيرس i.e. Greek/Coptic Κῦρος) as though it were a simple misreading for the Ethiopic *bers* or *birs* (ቤርስ or ቢርስ), the text’s designation for Cyrus’ Constantinopolitan counterpart Pyrrhus (via Arabic بيرس i.e. Greek/Coptic Πύρρος).⁷⁹ The alteration was repeated, without comment, in the English translation of Robert Charles and has provoked much confusion ever since.⁸⁰ But the crucial passage, which occurs after a report of Heraclius’ death in February 641,⁸¹ should be translated as follows:

And when Heraclius the Elder died, Pyrrhus (kirs), the patriarch (liqa pāppāsāt) of Constantinople, disregarded his sister Martina and her children, and he appointed Constantine (qʷaṣṭanṭin) who was born of the empress Eudocia (ʿawṭākiyā) and established him as head of the empire after his father. And the two kings they settled with honour and glory.⁸² David (dāwit) and Martin (mardinos)⁸³ arrested Cyrus (kirs) the Roman Chalcedonian patriarch (bābā) and exiled him to an island in the west of the province of Africa (ʿafriqyā) without anyone knowing what had been done... And Constantine (qʷaṣṭanṭinos) the son of Heraclius after he became emperor gathered together a large number of ships and entrusted them to Kiryus and to Salākəryus, and sent them to the patriarch Cyrus (kirs bābā) in order that they might bring him to him and he might

78. BOOTH 2013b.

79. ZOTENBERG 1883, pp. 444–6, with n. 1: “ክርስ [*kirs*] est la transcription fautive du nom de Pyrrhus, que le traducteur ou les copistes ont presque toujours confondu avec le nom de Cyrus, patriarche d’Alexandrie.”

80. CHARLES 1916, p. 185.

81. ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 204: “[T]he thirty-first year of his reign in the month of Yakātīt of the Egyptians, and in the months of the Romans February (*fərwariyus*), in the fourteenth year of the lunar cycle (*ʿudata qamar*), the 357th year of Diocletian [641].” Nicephorus, *Short history* 27 (with MANGO 1990, p. 191) implies that Heraclius died on February 11th. Agapius, *History* (ed. Vasiliev III p. 478) states that he died on Sunday 7th February AG 952 [641]—in fact in 641 the 7th February was a Wednesday, but the 11th was therefore a Sunday. Most scholars now think, however, that Heraclius died in January—see above n. 54. For John of Nikiu’s use of the “cycle” here, which works whether the cycle is the indiction or the lunar cycle, see below n. 125.

82. The meaning of this is not clear, but it perhaps refers to a settlement of Heraclius Constantine and his fellow Augustus Heraclonas (where the third person plural in Ethiopic represents an equivalent usage in the original Coptic, in which the same construction functions as the passive: thus “the two kings were settled”). ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 444 offers, “Les deux Césars furent traités avec respect et honneur;” CHARLES 1916, p. 185 has the same, with “princes.”

83. Both ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 444 and CHARLES 1916, p. 185 render “Martin” (*mardinos*) with “Marin/Marinus.”

take counsel with him and give tribute (ṣabbāht) to the Muslims—whether fighting were possible or not⁸⁴—and he might meet him in the imperial city during the Festival of the Holy Resurrection (tənšāʿa), and all the people of Constantinople would join with him and perform this act. And thereupon he sent to Anastasius that he should come to him and leave Theodore⁸⁵ to protect Alexandria and the cities which were situated on the coastline (ḥayqa bāhr). And he promised Theodore that he would send to him in the summer (zamana ḥagāy)⁸⁶ a large force of soldiers (ṣarāwit) so that they might fight the Muslims. And when at the emperor's command they prepared the ships for setting out, the emperor Constantine then fell ill, and contracted a serious illness, and vomited blood from his mouth. And when there was no more of that blood he then died. He remained in this illness for one hundred days, that is, his entire reign, he who became emperor after his father Heraclius.⁸⁷

The initial reference here to “kirs, patriarch of Constantinople” no doubt threw Zotenberg, who thereafter considered the remaining instances of *kirs* all to represent a scribe's or translator's error for *bers* or *birs*. It is probable that this first instance is indeed an error for an original “Pyrrhus, patriarch of Constantinople” (rather than “Cyrus, patriarch of *Alexandria*”) since Cyrus is but once called *liqa pāppāsāt* (lit. “leader of the bishops”) within the text, and in all other instances *bābā* (from Greek πάπας, the traditional title of the Alexandrian patriarch);⁸⁸ while Pyrrhus, in contrast, is always called *liqa pāppāsāt*.⁸⁹ The opening sentence, therefore, suggests that upon Heraclius' death the patriarch Pyrrhus disregarded Martina's sons and elevated Heraclius Constantine, the son of Eudocia.

Although this first instance of *kirs* looks like a mistake for *birs*, there is no reason to doubt that the second instance concerns Cyrus, in particular in light of the wider, aforementioned evidence for his fall from grace (and the simultaneous confusion which results if we attach the report to Pyrrhus).⁹⁰ This claims that after the accession of Heraclius

84. The meaning of the text is here not clear (and BN d'Abbadie 31, which Zotenberg did not use, does not help). Cf. ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 444: “[Il recommanda au général?] de payer tribut aux musulmans et de lutter s'il le pouvait, sinon, de revenir à la capitale ...;” also CHARLES 1916, p. 185 with n. 2: “... that he might take counsel with him as to the Moslem, that he should fight, if he were able, but, if not, should pay tribute.”

85. It is possible that the names “Anastasius” and “Theodore” have here been transposed, as suggested in BUTLER 1902, p. 303 n. 3 and thence in CHARLES 1916, p. 175 n. 83. But it would make little sense to recall Theodore, the leading general in Egypt, as the Muslim conquest was ongoing, and the correction is in part based on a misrepresentation of his career within the *Chronicle*; cf. below n. 163.

86. As often CHARLES 1916, p. 186 is in error in offering “autumn;” ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 445 has the correct reading (“été”).

87. *Chronicle* 116 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 204–5).

88. Besides the instance in the cited passage, Cyrus is called *kirs bābā* or simply *bābā* in all other instances except one, at *ibid.* pp. 204, 205 (three times), 209, 210, 211 (twice), 212 (seven times), 213 (four times), 214, 215 (twice), 218, 220. The exception is found in the opening words of chapter 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 211).

89. See the genuine appearances of Pyrrhus (*birs*, *bers*) in *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 216, 217, 218, 219) where he is without fail called *liqa pāppāsāt*.

90. There is no evidence that Pyrrhus had been exiled in this period, and no need to alter the clear statements of the *Chronicle*. For Pyrrhus' career the best account remains VAN DIETEN 1972, pp. 57–105, who puzzled at John of Nikiu's evidence (n. 10 above).

Constantine, “David and Martin” arrested Cyrus and banished him to Africa—later, the location is revealed to be Tripoli⁹¹—but the new emperor soon planned to recall him. Heraclius Constantine is then said to have prepared some ships to fetch Cyrus to the capital at Easter—which, in 641, fell on the 8th April—to have summoned from Egypt “Anastasius,” and to have promised to provide a force of troops to Theodore in the summer. The text here indicates, however, that one or both policies went unfulfilled, for when the ships—to bring Cyrus? to reach Egypt?—had been prepared, Heraclius Constantine died, and there is no report that the emperor and patriarch met in the capital as planned.

This tradition presents us with various problems. First of all, there is some evident chronological confusion. The *Chronicle* places Heraclius’ death in February 641, and reckons Heraclius Constantine’s reign at one hundred days. On its own internal witness, therefore, Heraclius Constantine would have died in May or June, making it quite possible for his plan to meet with Cyrus in the capital at Easter to have been fulfilled before his death. Thereafter, the information concerning David and Martin is also difficult to comprehend. David and Martin are the sons of Heraclius and Martina, both elevated to the rank of Caesar during the late reign of Heraclius.⁹² But in 641 both were still relative minors: David, the future emperor Tiberius, was born in 630;⁹³ and Martin, whose date of birth is unclear, was his junior.⁹⁴ Could the pair have carried out the reported action? It seems improbable that such a high-profile event could have been executed without the approval or cognizance of Heraclius Constantine.

Let us note two further problems in the passage. As we have seen, both the patriarch Pyrrhus and his Alexandrian counterpart Cyrus are presented as the enemies of Martina and her sons: the former in the opening sentence (which insinuates that the succession was somehow in the gift of the patriarch); and the latter in the suggestion that David and Tiberius were the agents of his exile. But, as we shall below, later in the text both patriarchs will in fact be presented as the *allies* of Martina. Moreover, here Heraclius Constantine sends, or intends to send, “Kiryus” and “Salākeryus” to bring the patriarch to Constantinople. What do these words mean? The latter name looks like a corruption

91. *Chronicle* 119 (ed. Zotenberg p. 211) will claim that Philagrius “was exiled to the province of Africa (*hagara’afriqyā*), where Cyrus (*kirs*) had been exiled” (Zotenberg and Charles again translate “Pyrrhus”); and *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 217) states that “they deposed the patriarch Pyrrhus (*bers*) without council and sent him from the church to the city of Tripoli (*‘aṭrāblus*), exiling him there where Philagrius was.” Cyrus, it therefore seems, was exiled to Tripoli in North Africa (although note that Nicephorus, *Short history* 30, claims Philagrius was sent to “Septai” [modern Ceuta] at the Pillars of Hercules).

92. See Nicephorus, *Short history* 27, which states that David and Martin were made Caesars after the first consulship of Heraklonas (probably from the 1st January 639). The *Book of ceremonies* 2.27 however claims that David became Caesar upon Heraclonas’ elevation as Augustus (July 638), and at *ibid.* 2.29 describes a series of acclamations offered on January 4th 639 in which David is described as Caesar but Martin as *nobilissimus*. CPR XXIII 35, from October or November 641, includes a regnal formula in which David is described as being in his fourth year as Caesar, Martin as his third. We can thus place Martin’s elevation to Caesar between January and November 639. See further MITTHOF 2002, pp. 222–30, no. 35, with the correction of ZUCKERMAN 2010, p. 875.

93. Theophanes, AM 6122, with PLRE III David 8; *PmbZ* David 1241.

94. See n. 92 above. Cf. PLRE III Marinos 12; *PmbZ* Marinos 4774.

of σακελλάριος⁹⁵—and in this period the imperial *sacellarius*, at least, was Philagrius, who appears throughout the later *Chronicle* under the Ethiopic *firkəlyus*, *firkəryus*, or *filkəryus*. Could the Ethiopic *kiryus*, therefore, be a corrupted remnant of his name, so that the original phrase was “Philagrius Sacellarius”?⁹⁶ We cannot be sure, but it is nevertheless sufficient to note here that later in the text, the *sacellarius* will be presented not as Cyrus’ saviour but rather as his principal antagonist. The various political allegiances described within our passage, therefore, will soon be inverted.

In order to comprehend these difficulties, let us now turn to the second tradition of Cyrus’ recall from exile. Once again Zotenberg and Charles have disguised its witness through translating the Ethiopic *kirs* as “Pyrrhus.”⁹⁷ It occurs three chapters later, in *Chronicle* 119:

And when Constantine (q^wastānīnos) the son of Heraclius died they brought forward Heraclius his brother from the same father, who was still a child. But he assumed the empire in vain, like his brother who died. And Cyrus (kirs) the patriarch then saw the younger Heraclius (ḥərqāl ʾənza nəʾus)⁹⁸ had become emperor through the plan (məkr) of Martina his mother, though he Cyrus (kirs) was still in exile. And after he became emperor he recalled Cyrus (kirs) from exile on the advice of the senators (šarāwit),⁹⁹ and he abolished the penal decree which had been written by his brother Constantine and the emperors who preceded him. For they deposed him on the unjust accusation of Philagrius (farkəlyos) the lieutenant (nāyəb)... And thereupon he appointed him for a second time to the city of Alexandria, and the priests who were with him, and he gave him the power and authority that he might make peace with the Muslims and not oppose them, and set up a law of governance as was fit for the governance of the province of Egypt (hagara məsr).¹⁰⁰

Here, then, we are presented with a different tradition of the patriarch’s reinstatement, with little hint of the earlier statement that Heraclius Constantine had, at least, intended

95. I am grateful to James Howard-Johnston for the suggestion of *sacellarius*. Note that BN d’Abbadie 31, a ms. which Zotenberg did not use, has [la]sakāryus (159r). ALTHEIM & STIEHL 1971, p. 366 n. 70 explain the Ethiopic *salākəryus* (Arabic سلاكر يوس) as a misreading of فيلاكر يوس i.e. Philagrius. Although this makes little difference to our reading it is nevertheless notable that the same alleged mistake is never repeated later in the text, where Philagrius appears ten separate times under the Ethiopic names *firkəlyus*, *firkəryus*, *filkəryus* (ed. Zotenberg pp. 210, 211, 215, 217, 219).

96. Note that if this is the case, the Arabic translator seems in later instances to have realised that *sacellarius* is an office, since the Ethiopic then describes Philagrius three times as *nāyəb* (ed. Zotenberg pp. 210, 211), from Arabic *nāʾib*, “representative, agent.”

97. ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 452, with n. 2; CHARLES 1916, p. 191 (once again repeating Zotenberg’s translation without comment).

98. For this designation of Heraclonas cf. below n. 159.

99. In Ethiopic *šarāwit* means “soldiers” but in some instances it is clear that it derives from an original “senators” which the Arabic translator has perhaps misunderstood. For a good example see *Chronicle* 71 (ed. Zotenberg p. 64), where *šarāwit* corresponds to an original συγκλητικοί in the source: John Malalas, *Chronicle* 10.52.17–53.32 (ed. Thurn pp. 201–2). Note, however, that this is not consistent—cf. e.g. *Chronicle* 67 with Malalas, *Chronicle* 9.24.50–4 (Thurn 171 f.)—although it seems that in our later context Heraclonas and Cyrus are pitted against the military (esp. the general Valentine), hence the translation here.

100. *Chronicle* 119 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 210–1).

to restore him.¹⁰¹ Instead the patriarch's exile is said to have been perpetuated under Constantine III, and is attributed not to the Caesars David and Martin but to the aforementioned *sacellarius* Philagrius. Cyrus' saviour here is Heraclonas, and the entire passage, in contrast to that which precedes it, presents Martina and her sons as the patriarch's allies.

An important clue towards understanding this apparent contradiction is contained later in the text, where the duplication of traditions concerning Cyrus' recall is mirrored in conflicting reports concerning his death. These reports occur in separate places in *Chronicle* 120 (and here Zotenberg and Charles both offer the correct translation of *kirs*). The first occurs after details of the patriarch's return to Egypt in September (641),¹⁰² a prediction that he would not live to see the next Easter,¹⁰³ and his attempts to negotiate a peace with 'Amr. It reads:

Indeed the patriarch Cyrus (kirs) was greatly distressed of heart because of the tribulation which there was in the province of Egypt (hagara mäsṛ). 'Amr showed no mercy to the Christians, and did not do as they had agreed in treaty with him, for he was from a barbarian race. When it was the day of the feast of Palm Sunday, the patriarch Cyrus (kirs) fell ill with a fever on account of the great sadness of his heart, and he died on the fifth day of Easter, on the 25th of the month of Magābit. He did not [live to] see the festival of the holy Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, exactly as the Christians had predicted about him. This happened in the time of the emperor Constantine (qʷastəntənyus) son of Heraclius.¹⁰⁴

101. Note that the statement concerning "the emperors who preceded him" is perhaps a confused reference to the earlier statement concerning David and Martin. I would regard this as a later addition to the text; see below p. 27.

102. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 212) states, "[Cyrus] entered Alexandria during the night of the 17th of Maskaram, on the day of the Festival of the Holy Cross." Maskaram is the Ethiopic equivalent of the Coptic month Thoth which ran from the 29th August. The 17th Maskaram is thus the 14th September in the Julian calendar, that is, the Exaltation of the Cross.

103. Note that this creates a chronological problem, since it seems certain that Cyrus returned after Easter 641, but died in Easter week 642 (below n. 106). Since the text otherwise leaps forward here six months, from the Exaltation of the Cross in September 641 to the Easter of March 642, we must suspect some confusion in the process of transmission, and conclude that the use of the wrong psalm in fact occurred during the Exaltation of the Cross. As BUTLER 1902, pp. 538–40 points out the immediate setting of the tale is doubtless a festival of the cross: "When Cyrus the patriarch (*kirs bābā*) came to the great church of Caesarion (*qisāryon*) they laid out carpets for him over all the ground and sang hymns to him, until men trod upon men. After much effort they brought him to the church. He extolled the pit (*ʾazaqt*) which contained the holy cross, which he took from the official John (*masfān*) before his exile. Moreover he took the glorious cross from the Monastery of the Theodosians" (ed. Zotenberg p. 212). I follow BUTLER 1902, p. 314 n. 2 in supposing that the Ethiopic translator has leapt from the first instance of "cross" to the second before realising his mistake, so that the detail concerning John in fact attaches to the cross at the Monastery of the Theodosians; and the first cross is simply the True Cross, the invention of which Cyrus "extolled" in a sermon. There nevertheless remains a problem in that the omitted psalm is 118:24, which was sung on Easter Sunday but not, it seems, at the Exaltation of the Cross (see e.g. TARCHNISCHVILI 1959–1960, p. 745).

104. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 215). Note that the final statement, that Cyrus' death occurred under Heraclius Constantine is difficult to understand. Since the subsequence text at once passes to the account of Heraclonas' reign contained within the "Constantinopolitan source" (see

It therefore comes as something of a surprise when the reader encounters a second report of Cyrus' death, after a long section of text which details political tensions in Constantinople during the reign of Heraclonas, his deposition after the intrigues of Valentine, and the subsequent elevation of Constans II as sole ruler. This reads:

But when Cyrus (kirs) the Chalcedonian patriarch (bābā) in Alexandria heard this he was extremely grieved over the exile of Martina and her children, who had brought him back from exile; over the deposition of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Pyrrhus (birs), the return of Philagrius (farkāryos) who was his enemy, the death of the bishop Arcadius (ʿargādyus), and the triumph and power of Valentine (lawəndyus). And for this reason he began to weep without ceasing, fearing lest that what happened to him before might happen again. And in this sorrow he died, in accordance with the law of nature.¹⁰⁵

We are therefore presented with two distinct traditions: one which places Cyrus' death in Easter week of 642 (the only possible year when Maundy Thursday fell on the 25th Magābit, that is, 21st March),¹⁰⁶ and which emphasises his distress at 'Amr's broken promises in Egypt, as well as the fulfilment of the earlier prediction of the patriarch's death; and another which places it at an unspecified point in the reign of Constans II, and which emphasises instead his distress at events in Constantinople, where his enemies Philagrius and Valentine were ascendant. How should we explain this duplication?

THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN SOURCE

The obvious solution to this doubling of material is to posit the existence within the current text of the *Chronicle* of two unreconciled sources. Indeed, I will attempt now to demonstrate that this duplication is indicative of two distinct streams of information within the text, one of which belongs to a single source. This source provides a consistent narrative focused on a coherent cast of political actors (in particular, Martina, Heraclonas, Philagrius, and Valentine); its evidence is situated for the most part in Constantinople; and it is bookended with the reinstatement and (second) death of the patriarch Cyrus. It can still be isolated within the extant *Chronicle*, and appears in three distinct blocks within the extant chapters 119 and 120.¹⁰⁷ (Note that these blocks are marked in italics within the left hand column of Table 1 below.)

Let us first of all examine their narrative in some depth. The first block commences with the death of Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas' recall of Cyrus in order to make peace with the Muslims. As we have seen, the patriarch's exile is here attributed to the

below), it is perhaps best explained as the later editor's misguided attempt to create a bridge between his two sources, as evident elsewhere; cf. p. 34.

105. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 218–9).

106. The 25th of Magābit corresponds to the Coptic 25th of Phamenoth, which in the Julian calendar is the 21st March. This report places Cyrus' death on the fifth day of Easter, that is, Maundy Thursday. Of the possible years, Maundy Thursday only fell on the 21st March in 642 (in 641 it fell on the 5th April and in 643 on the 10th April).

107. The sections are as follows (using Robert Charles numerical division of chapters for reference): 1) 119.18–20.6; 2) 120.39–55; 3) 120.61–7. That more-or-less these same sections derive from a separate source is also suggested in HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, p. 183 n. 71.

previous accusation of Philagrius, but the latter is then himself banished, leading to a rebellion against Martina and Heraclonas, aimed at recognising the claim of the children of Heraclius Constantine. At this, Valentine removed large amounts of gold from the coffers of Philagrius, and distributed it amongst the soldiers, so that some of them then declared war on Martina and her sons. These rebels then sent secret messages to Rhodes—encouraging the troops with Cyrus, now en route to Alexandria, to abandon him and return to the capital—and to Alexandria, North Africa, and other places, encouraging dissent against Martina and her sons.¹⁰⁸

The second block of text continues this same narrative. It reports the march of Valentine to Chalcedon, and Heraclonas' crossing of the Bosphorus to persuade the troops to desist, as well as his promises to recognise Heraclius Constantine's son Heraclius, the future emperor Constans, as his imperial colleague, and to restore Philagrius from exile. As a result, the *Chronicle* reports, Heraclius-Constans was elevated to the rank of emperor, and the rebels dispersed. The peace, however, did not prove lasting. Soon after, tensions between the two emperors heightened, and the soldiers in Cappadocia began to agitate against Heraclonas, producing a letter purporting to be from Martina and the patriarch Pyrrhus to David "the Translator" (*matargw'm*)¹⁰⁹ which encouraged him to launch a coup against the sons of Heraclius Constantine, and to take Martina as his wife. In the capital, the *Chronicle* continues, rumours circulated of the involvement of Qətrādəs (Kubrat?), head of the tribe of Muṭāns, nephew of K'wərnāka,¹¹⁰ who had been baptised and raised in Constantinople, and favoured the claim of Heraclonas, and as a

108. *Chronicle* 119 (in Charles' numbering, 119.18–20.6).

109. It is almost certain that the Ethiopic *matargw'm* is a simple transliteration of the Arabic *mutarjim* (مترجم) which means "translator." We might therefore think of a literal but mistaken reading of the Greek/Coptic λογοθέτης, and assume that David was a logothete of some sort (this seems to be the reasoning of ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 459, cf. also p. 355 n. 3). This, however, would not seem to match his described role. The word *matargw'm* (or pl. *matargw'mān*) also appears in *Chronicle* 88 and 92 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 124, 163): in the former instance it is applied to the pagan philosopher Isocassius ("matargw'm in Antioch"), in the second to the historian Agathias (Ἀγαθίας) (ed. Zotenberg p. 397 n. 4 supposes an original *scholasticus*). The first case gives some ideas of the potential corruptions in transmission, however, since we know the ultimate source, which is John Malalas, *Chronicle* 14.38 (ed. Thurn p. 292). Here Isocassius is called Ἰσοκάσιος ὁ κοιαιστῶριος ὁ φιλόσοφος ὡς Ἕλληνας ὅστις κατήγετο ἐκ γένους Αἰγέωτης τῆς Κιλικίας· ἦν δὲ κτήτωρ Ἀντιοχείας τῆς μεγάλης. The Ethiopic has "[A] philosopher called Ἐπιδάσιος son of Kistur. He was a man rich in wisdom and a just judge. For he was a Hellene (*hanafāwi*) and used to help the men of Cilicia (*qiləqyā*) while he was *matargw'm* in Antioch." ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 355 n. 3 concludes that here, at least, *matargw'm* derives somehow from κτήτωρ. David's role therefore seems irrecoverable, but it is possible that he is identical with that Armenian general described as active in this period in Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.10 and *Chronicle* to 1234 122–3, where his expedition against the Muslims is said to have led to the defeat of Valentine, probably identical with ours (cf. below n. 146); he nevertheless seems distinct from the David Saharuni who has implicated in a plot to overthrow Heraclius (Ps.-Sebeos, *History* 41). For the possible identifications see *PLRE* IIIA David Saharuni 6; but cf. *PmbZ* David Matarguem (?) 1242.

110. It seems probable that this person is the Bulgar khagan Kubrat, described as an ally of Heraclius at Nicephorus, *Short history* 22, and called Κούβρατος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Ὁργανᾶ ὁ τῶν Οὐνογουνοῦρων κύριος (Mango 85). Qətrādəs is a corruption of قتراطس read as قتراضس vel sim., while K'wərnāka seems to derive from Ὁργανᾶ (perhaps via Γοργάνας/ΓΟΡΓΑΝΑΣ). On this identification in more detail see BESHEVLIEV 1978, who associates the *Chronicle*'s report with the Constantinopolitan baptism of ὁ τῶν Οὐννων τοῦ ἔθνους κύριος mentioned in Nicephorus, *Short history* 9 (Mango 48), and thus suggests

consequence the soldiers and people of Constantinople rose up and appointed “Euthalius (*yutāliyyus*) son of Constantine who was called Theodore,”¹¹¹ who forced David’s flight and then defeated him in Armenia, before returning to the capital and arresting, mutilating, and exiling Martina and her sons to Rhodes. Pyrrhus was then deposed and banished to Tripoli, while Philagrius was restored and Paul appointed patriarch.¹¹² It seems probable that the positioning of Martina’s fall *before* the consecration of Paul is an error: the *History to 641* places Paul’s elevation in October 641, but does not describe the empress’ disgrace, which seems to have occurred in early November.¹¹³ John of Nikiu, it is true, seems to report a period of prolonged civil war before Martina’s fall, which might tempt us to project it further forward in time.¹¹⁴ But since the described campaign in Armenia is improbable in the winter months, we must suppose that the conflict of David and Euthalius occurred in a condensed period of time, and that it perhaps began even before the recognition of Heraclius-Constans as co-emperor (in September 641?).¹¹⁵

After a digression on the fulfilment of a prediction of Severus of Antioch concerning the succession of Chalcedonian emperors, our third and final block continues to relate the attempts of Valentine to assume the purple, his subsequent oath of allegiance to Constans, and the marriage of his daughter to the emperor. Valentine, the *Chronicle* continues, then made an accusation against Arcadius, the archbishop of Cyprus, calling him an ally of Martina and Pyrrhus, and an opponent of Constans. The emperor ordered the archbishop’s arrest, but Arcadius had died before the command could be executed. The posited source then ends with the aforementioned (second) account of Cyrus’ death, commenting on his angst at events in the capital.¹¹⁶

In his edition of the text, Zotenberg perceived that the second account of Cyrus’ death derived from another source describing the accession of Constans, but also considered that the same account demonstrated John of Nikiu’s simple failure to reconcile his sources.¹¹⁷ There is good reason, however, to suppose a more complex scenario, in which an editor—perhaps John, perhaps not—has integrated this source within a pre-existing version of the *Chronicle*. This view is suggested in the oft-ignored chapter rubrics which preface the main text, and which serve as a table of contents. These rubrics are not comprehensive,

(following J. Marquart) that Muṭāns is a corruption of Οὐννων. Going further, since this is sometimes aspirated Οὐννων, we can then imagine Coptic ϣΟΥΝΝΩΝ rendered هوناون and misread موتانس vel sim.

111. Note that this person seems otherwise to be unknown, and the qualification “son of Constantine who was called Theodore” is not clear; cf. *PmbZ* Iulius 3658. “Euthalius” seems to me the most obvious reading of the Ethiopic *yutāliyyus*, although there is scope for considerable corruption in transmission.

112. *Chronicle* 120 (in Charles’ numbering, 120.39–55). Note that Pyrrhus seems in fact to have resigned, as Nicephorus’ source states; cf. above n. 61.

113. See the discussion below p. 37.

114. Cf. below p. 38.

115. The date is unclear. Both John of Nikiu and Nicephorus (*Short history* 31) place it before the fall of Pyrrhus, known to have occurred in late September 641. The *Short history* also places the elevation of Heraclius-Constans “when vintage time had arrived” (τῆς τρύγης δὲ ἐπιλαβούσης), that is, in late August or September. MANGO 1990, p. 192 follows BROOKS 1895, p. 440 n. 2 in placing that elevation in September, the latter pointing to the *Acts of the Lateran Council* (ed. Riedinger p. 2), the first session of which, on 5th October 649, is said to occur in the ninth year of Constans.

116. *Chronicle* 120 (in Charles’ numbering, 120.61–7).

117. ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 463 n. 1.

and sometimes omit central episodes contained within the corresponding chapters of the main text; but at the same time, they sometimes in turn refer to episodes absent from the main text. This suggests, therefore, that while the coverage of the rubrics is far from perfect, they nevertheless represent an earlier version of the *Chronicle*, which has suffered from a subsequent abbreviation so as to omit certain episodes. Since the rubrics for chapters 116–22 are crucial to comprehending the structure and progression of their narrative, it is perhaps worthwhile to set out them out in full.¹¹⁸ In the subsequent table I offer these rubrics in the central column (the left-hand column represents the scheme of the extant text; while the right-hand column represents the reconstructed shape of the earlier scheme of the text, to which I shall return).

If we can be confident that the rubrics represent an earlier version of the text, then the dissonance between their contents and those of the main text (described in the left-hand column of the table above) might also allow us to perceive certain alterations imposed upon that earlier version. From this perspective, rubrics 116–8 correspond more or less with the main text, with two minor changes: first, from rubric 115, which precedes those set out above,¹¹⁹ it appears that the chapters describing the earliest stages of the conquest (111–5) once culminated in the surrender of Babylon at Easter, March 641 (which now appears in chapter 117);¹²⁰ and second, from rubric 116, it appears that the tradition of Cyrus' return to Alexandria was once described there (it now appears in chapter 120).¹²¹ Otherwise the narrative of the rubrics and the main text is here consistent. Thus chapter 116 reports the death of Heraclius in February 641,¹²² but also how his son and successor recalled Cyrus from exile, summoning him to meet him in the capital for Easter 641;¹²³ while the subsequent chapter, 117, then relates how Easter 641 had

118. Readers should note that due to an earlier miscount in the rubrics (where the content of *Chronicle* 65 is omitted) the numbering has been disrupted, so that rubric 116 in fact describes chapter 117, and rubric 117 describes chapter 118. For the sake of clarity I have corrected these numbers.

119. See ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 25: "How the Muslims seized Misr in the fourteenth year of the cycle (*'udat*); and in the fifteenth year they seized the fortress of Babylon (*māḥfada bābilon*)."

120. For the date see *Chronicle* 117 (ed. Zotenberg p. 206): "And at this the Muslims seized the citadel of Babylon in Egypt (*zamāsr*) on the second day after the Resurrection (*tānsā'ā*)."

In the rubric for chapter 115, it states that Babylon fell in the fifteenth year of the cycle (*'udat*). If the cycle were the indiction this would mean Easter 642; but there is good reason to think that John uses the nineteen-year Alexandrian lunar cycle, which changes on March 23rd, and which would give for the Easter in the "fifteenth year" April 641; cf. below n. 125. There is clear evidence within the *Chronicle* that Cyrus returned to Alexandria in September 641 and died in Easter week 642, but in the meantime had negotiated with 'Amr at Babylon, *after* its surrender. The fall of Babylon must therefore have occurred on the 10th April 641. The rubric suggests that in the original text, the event was placed in chapter 115, although it now appears in 117. The reason for the change of position is no doubt the subsequent description, in chapter 116, of Heraclius Constantine's proposal to meet Cyrus in Constantinople at the same date, meaning that Heraclius must have died *before* the fortress' fall. But a precise annalistic format was not John of Nikiu's concern.

121. See below p. 28.

122. See above n. 81.

123. See *Chronicle* 116 (ed. Zotenberg p. 205): "And Constantine (*q^waštantinos*) the son of Heraclius after he became emperor gathered together a large number of ships ... and sent them to the patriarch Cyrus (*kirs bābā*) in order that ... he might meet him in the imperial city during the Festival of the Holy Resurrection (*tānsā'ā*)."

| <i>Ch.</i> | <i>The scheme of the extant text (with the Constantinopolitan source in italics; material redistributed from the earlier scheme in bold)</i> | <i>The scheme of the rubrics (with absences from the main text underlined)</i> | <i>The postulated original scheme (with the redistributed or redacted material in bold)</i> |
|------------|--|---|---|
| 116 | Death of Heraclius. Exile of Cyrus by David and Martin, intended recall by Heraclius Constantine to renew tribute. Death of Heraclius Constantine, with prophecy of Severus of Antioch. Gaianite episode at Taposiris Magna. | On the death of the emperor Heraclius and the return of the patriarch Cyrus from exile, and his coming to Egypt in order to give tribute to the Muslims. | Death of Heraclius. Exile of Cyrus by David and Martin, intended recall by Heraclius Constantine. Death of Heraclius Constantine, with prophecy of Severus of Antioch. Return of Cyrus to Alexandria to renew tribute. Prediction concerning his death [moved to chapter 120 in the main text]. Gaianite episode at Taposiris Magna. |
| 117 | The surrender of Babylon to 'Amr at Easter [moved from chapter 115 within the earlier scheme]. The abuse of orthodox prisoners at Easter as an explanation of the Muslim conquest. | How God delivered the Romans into the hands of the Muslims on account of their division and schism, and the persecution which they visited upon the Christians of Egypt. | The abuse of orthodox prisoners at Easter as an explanation of the Muslim conquest. |
| 118 | The conquest of Nikiu. The conquest of Caesarea and other events in the eastern Mediterranean [moved from chapter 119 within the earlier scheme] | How 'Amr subdued 'Abshādi, that is, Nikiu, and the flight of Domentianus the general and the death of his troops in the waters. And the great massacre which occurred in the city of Nikiu, and in all the remaining cities, until 'Amr came to the city of Sāwnā, which is under the rule of Nikiu and its island, on the 18th of the month of Gānbot, in the fifteenth year of the cycle. | The conquest of Nikiu. |

Table 1 – A comparison of the schemes of the extant main text, rubrics, and posited earlier scheme.

| Ch. | <i>The scheme of the extant text (with the Constantinopolitan source in italics; material redistributed from the earlier scheme in bold)</i> | <i>The scheme of the rubrics (with absences from the main text underlined)</i> | <i>The postulated original scheme (with the redistributed or redacted material in bold)</i> |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 119 | Strife between pro- and anti-Muslim parties in the Delta. The repulsion of an initial Muslim assault upon Alexandria. Strife in Alexandria between Eudocianus and Domentianus on the one side, and Philades and Menas on the other. Domentianus is deposed [moved from chapter 121 within the earlier scheme]. <i>Heraclonas' succession. The recall of Cyrus from exile. The banishment of Cyrus' opponent, Philagrius, from Constantinople.</i> | How the Muslims subdued Caesarea (<i>qisāryā</i>) in Palestine, and the tribulation which came upon her. | The conquest of Caesarea and other events in the eastern Mediterranean [reduced at the end of chapter 119 within the main text] |
| 120 | <i>Opposition to the regime of Martina and Heraclonas from the general Valentine. The regime's enemies encourage the rebellion of the Egyptian general Theodore and the troops with Cyrus on Rhodes. Return of Cyrus to Alexandria to renew tribute. Prediction concerning his death [moved from 116 within the earlier scheme].</i> Cyrus goes to Babylon and agrees a treaty with 'Amr. The Muslims' Roman appointees increase the burden on the province. A Muslim raid on Pentapolis. The death of Cyrus of Alexandria on Maundy Thursday, repenting the loss of Egypt [moved from chapter 121 within the earlier scheme]. <i>Political tensions in Constantinople. The elevation of Constans II as co-emperor and the deposition of Heraclonas. The prediction of Severus of Antioch that no Chaldean emperor would succeed his father [duplicated from chapter 116 within the earlier scheme]. Tensions between Constans and Valentine. The latter's summons of the (deceased) Arcadius of Cyprus. The death of Cyrus of Alexandria. Theodore and his troops withdraw from Alexandria [moved from chapter 121 within the earlier scheme]</i> | Concerning the great earthquake and the death which was visited upon the Cretans and to their island, and to the all the regions which surround them. | An earthquake on Crete and surrounding regions [removed from the main text] |

Table 1 – A comparison of the schemes of the extant main text, rubrics, and posited earlier scheme (continued).

| Ch. | <i>The scheme of the extant text (with the Constantinopolitan source in italics; material redistributed from the earlier scheme in bold)</i> | <i>The scheme of the rubrics (with absences from the main text underlined)</i> | <i>The postulated original scheme (with the redistributed or redacted material in bold)</i> |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 121 | The return from exile of the patriarch Benjamin. The activities of 'Amr in post-conquest Egypt. John of Damietta appointed over Alexandria. The conversion to Islam of many Egyptians. | Concerning Cyrus the patriarch of the Chalcedonians. It was he who went to Babylon and to 'Amr the head of the Muslims, and brought him to a ship and surrendered into his hands. And furthermore how 'Amr burdened the Egyptians with taxes. And the death of the Chalcedonian Cyrus after he repented that he had delivered the city of Alexandria into the hands of the Muslims. | Strife between pro- and anti-Muslim parties in the Delta. The repulsion of an initial Muslim assault upon Alexandria. Strife in Alexandria between Eudocianus and Domentianus on the one side, and Philiadēs and Menas on the other. Domentianus is deposed [used to create chapter 119 in the main text]. Cyrus goes to Babylon and agrees a treaty with 'Amr. Cyrus returns to Alexandria. The Muslims' Roman appointees increase the burden on the province. A Muslim raid on Pentapolis. The death of Cyrus of Alexandria on Maundy Thursday, repenting the loss of Egypt. Theodore and his troops withdraw from Alexandria [used to create chapter 120 in the main text]. |
| 122 | | Concerning the return of Abba Benjamin the patriarch of Egypt from his exile in the region of Rif in the fourteenth year. Of these, ten years because the Roman emperors exiled him; four years under the empire of the Muslims. And what remained thereafter, with the conclusion of the work. | The return from exile of the patriarch Benjamin. The activities of 'Amr in post-conquest Egypt. John of Damietta appointed over Alexandria. The conversion to Islam of many Egyptians. |

Table 1 – A comparison of the schemes of the extant main text, rubrics, and posited earlier scheme (end).

also witnessed the persecution of orthodox prisoners in Alexandria.¹²⁴ These sections therefore focus on the concurrence of three events at Easter 641, and use the abuse of the orthodox, conducted in the patriarch's absence, as the explanation for the divine punishment evident in Muslim success, further manifested in the conquest of Nikiu in May 641 (chapter 118).¹²⁵

It is with chapters 119–20 that the more significant problems begin. First of all, the main text contains several large episodes which are not mentioned in the rubrics. We might suppose that this is a simple manifestation of the rubrics' sometimes inadequate coverage, but there is nevertheless a significant complication with this explanation, for here we also encounter a problem which is otherwise unique, that is, a total breakdown in the correspondence between the chapters described in the rubrics and the main text. Thus, from the rubrics it is clear that at some point the *Chronicle* contained two full chapters concerning events at Caesarea (rubric 119) and Crete (rubric 120). The original chapter 119, however, seems now to appear in paraphrase in the conclusion to the extant chapter 118, while the original chapter 120 has dropped out completely. Indeed, where once chapter 118 led onto to these two chapters concerning the wider Mediterranean, before returning to describe the peace negotiations in Egypt, and Cyrus' death (rubric 121), the extant text has instead two quite different chapters, 119–20: the former has no correspondent in the rubrics; while the latter does contain the peace negotiations described in rubric 121, but much more besides. It is clear, then, that some significant and otherwise unique alterations have here been applied so as to create a sudden dissonance between the basic numbering of the rubrics and their corresponding chapters.

But how should we explain this? The alteration to the rubrics' scheme is, I suggest, the simple product of the later integration of our Constantinopolitan source within the earlier scheme. Despite its considerable size and spread, *none* of its material is mentioned within the rubrics. Moreover, as we have seen above, it contains several points which contradict the wider narrative: in particular, traditions concerning Cyrus' restoration and death are duplicated; and where chapter 116 presents the sons of Martina as the patriarch's enemies, and Heraclius Constantine and the *sacellarius* Philagrius as his allies, in the Constantinopolitan material these allegiances are inverted. If these contradictions suggest the presence of two conflicting sources, the simultaneous absence of this substantial material from the rubrics, and the striking disruption of the correspondence between the numbering of rubrics and chapters at this precise point, suggest that the same material was not a feature of the original *Chronicle*, but has been integrated within it at a later stage. At

124. See *Chronicle* 117 (ed. Zotenberg p. 206): "On the same day of the Festival of the Holy Resurrection (*tānsāʿā*) some orthodox prisoners were released. But those enemies of Christ did not leave them without evil, but beat them and cut off their hands." Cf. below p. 36.

125. For the date *Chronicle* 118 (ed. Zotenberg p. 208): "[O]n Sunday (*ʿalata ʿahud*) the 18th of the month of Gənbət in the fifteenth year of the cycle (*ʿudat*)" (compare also the chapter rubric at *ibid.* 26, giving the same date, without the day). It is almost certain that this "cycle" is not the indiction but rather the nineteen-year lunar cycle; see BUTLER 1902, pp. 536–41; BOOTH 2013b, p. 643 n. 15; *contra* HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, pp. 185–9 with n. 82. The dating of the conquest of Nikiu supports the contention that the cycle is the lunar cycle and not the indiction (the former giving 641, the latter 642) for in 642 the 18th of Gənbət, the 13th May in the Julian calendar, fell on a Monday. In 641 the 13th May was, therefore, on a Sunday.

the same time, moreover, if we isolate the material derived from the Constantinopolitan source, and use the rubrics as our guide to the earlier progression of the text, we can begin to appreciate some of the alterations which our later editor, in an attempt to integrate the new information, has imposed, and thus also to speculate concerning the precise contents and sequencing of the *Chronicle's* earlier scheme (the right-hand column of the table above).

The integration of the Constantinopolitan source no doubt presented a considerable challenge. There seems to have been little indication, within the earlier scheme, of the reigns of Heraclonas and Constans: instead Heraclius Constantine called Cyrus to the capital for the purpose of renewing tribute; Cyrus came to Egypt for that purpose (see rubric 116); and then he went to 'Amr to negotiate the terms of the tribute, later mourning, at his death, 'Amr's faithlessness (rubric 121).¹²⁶ Confronted with the new Constantinopolitan source, however, and thus also with the tradition putting that reinstatement under Heraclonas, an editor has suspected the *Chronicle's* error, and attempted to correct its information, while preserving, through redistribution, as much of the original material as possible. Besides a minor chronological alteration—the aforementioned relocation of the fall of Babylon from chapter 115 to 117¹²⁷—this has involved three prominent changes to the scheme represented in the rubrics: 1) the traditions relating Cyrus' recall under Heraclius Constantine have been altered so as to present it as an aborted plan, and the patriarch's return to Alexandria, which once appeared in the subsequent section of chapter 116 (as suggested in its rubric), has been relocated to a later context; 2) the digressive chapters on Caesarea and Crete have been reduced (perhaps for their lack of direct relevance); and 3) two new chapters have been created, interweaving the relocated material on Cyrus' return to Alexandria, the original chapter 121 (on Cyrus' peace negotiations), and the Constantinopolitan source. (The first and third of these changes have, for clarity, been highlighted within the table, so that the transpositions can be seen). The new chapter 119 and, in particular, chapter 120 are as a consequence far longer than all those which precede them in this final section.¹²⁸

The rearrangement of material is sometimes rather careless, however, and has left crucial traces within the main text, irrespective of the rubrics. Besides the dual traditions surrounding Cyrus' recall and death, chapter 116 contains a brief reference, placed before the report of Heraclius Constantine's death, to a prediction of Severus of Antioch in a letter "to the patricia Caesaria" (*ḥaba baṭriqā qisāryā*) that while Chalcedon was recognised no Roman emperor would succeed his father. This in fact is extant as Severus' *Letter 55*.¹²⁹ But it is then quite striking that the same quotation is repeated again, and expounded at greater length, in connection with the death of Heraclonas, where it

126. See *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 212–3): "Thereafter the patriarch Cyrus rose up and went to Babylon to the Muslims, wanting to make peace and give them tribute (*ṣabbāḥt*), in order that they might put a stop to war in the province of Egypt." Note that this tradition of renewing tribute (*ṣabbāḥt*) appears also in Heraclius Constantine's reported intention, and in rubric 116, but is not mentioned in the Constantinopolitan source.

127. See above n. 120.

128. In Zotenberg's edition, most of these final chapters run to between one and two pages. Chapter 119 runs to two and a half; and 120 to eight and a half.

129. Ed. Brooks 1915, pp. 333–4.

interrupts the transition between the second and third sections of our posited source on affairs in Constantinople.¹³⁰ It seems improbable that the original text had used the same quotation twice. If so, then we have another instance of duplication; and again we have a tradition which was once attached in full to Heraclius Constantine, but then duplicated and elaborated in connection with Heraclonas.

I have argued above that the same chapter 116 once described the return of Cyrus to Alexandria, as suggested in its rubric. That this is correct seems to be demonstrated in the conclusion to the same chapter, where the reader suddenly encounters an unexpected anecdote concerning a Gaianite plot to assassinate Cyrus.¹³¹ This relates how the Gaianites (that is, Egypt's Julianist miaphysites) assembled at a church near the bridge of St. Peter near Dafāshar, the Arabic for Taposiris Magna, west of Alexandria.¹³² Their intention was to harm the patriarch for his previous persecution of them, but this plot was foiled through Eudocianus, who killed some and then punished others with mutilation. This offers John of Nikiu (or, perhaps, a later editor) an occasion to expound upon the connection between Chalcedonian persecution and Muslim success, a theme developed at greater length later in the text; and the anecdote ends with the observation that, "After the death of Heraclius and the return of the patriarch Cyrus (*kiros bābā*) he did not abandon the anger and persecution against the people of God, but began to heap evil upon evil."¹³³ We will return to the content of this anecdote below but, unless some crucial sentence(s) explaining its placement has dropped out in transmission, it seems probable that it once appeared *after* an account of the patriarch's return, when the Gaianites, perhaps, were anticipating his presence in Taposiris, en route to meet 'Amr in the south.¹³⁴ For some reason, however, the person who has removed the report of that return has decided to retain the anecdote relating the attempted assassination within its original position. The result is somewhat ham-fisted, and has often confused modern commentators.¹³⁵ But the apparent desire to preserve as much as possible from the earlier scheme, alongside the simultaneous failure to alter the relevant rubrics, provides a further crucial clue to the original content of chapter 116.

HAWKS AND DOVES AT CONSTANTINOPLE

Through the addition of the Constantinopolitan source to the *Chronicle*, our later editor has provided a far clearer picture of the tensions which surrounded Cyrus' exile and subsequent recall in the capital. As we have seen above, the claim of the earlier

130. See *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 217–8). Here it is said to be a letter "to the patricia/Patricia," without the name. In Charles' numbering this second instance of the prediction—which is further elaborated with a supposed miaphysite quotation from the Nazianzen—and some further observations on the connection of correct doctrine and Roman power—occurs at 120.56–60.

131. *Chronicle* 116 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 205–6).

132. See TIMM, pp. 2516–7. On the Gaianites see e.g. JARRY 1965.

133. *Chronicle* 116 (ed. Zotenberg p. 206).

134. The bridge there seems to have been an important crossing place across Lake Mareotis, on the route between Alexandria and the south. See the account of its destruction in the earlier civil war between Niketas and Bonosus in 609/10 at *Chronicle* 109.

135. See e.g. ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 446 n. 3: "Cet épisode paraît avoir été intercalé ici par erreur." Also BUTLER 1902, p. 191 n. 1; ALTHEIM & STIEHL 1971, p. 366 n. 75.

scheme of the *Chronicle*, that Heraclius Constantine recalled, or intended to recall, the patriarch does not seem cogent: first, in its claim that David and Martin were the agents of Cyrus' exile; and, second, in its statement that the emperor's death prevented a meeting in the capital at Easter. It seems more probable that the tradition represented in our Constantinopolitan source—which presents Philagrius as the agent of Cyrus' exile, which claims that it was perpetuated under Heraclius Constantine, and which aligns the patriarch with Martina and her sons—is the correct one. This would complement two further claims contained within the *History to 641* and the dependents of the eastern source: first, that the exile was first imposed under Heraclius; and second, that the principal motivation for the patriarch's disgrace was the shortfall in the fisc. In a context within which imperial revenues were no doubt plummeting, we should not be surprised that the imperial *sacellarius*—that is, the official who presided over imperial expenditure—proved hostile to a policy which represented a significant drain on imperial resources, and which simultaneously strengthened the hand of the empire's enemies.¹³⁶

In the earlier scheme of the *Chronicle*, Heraclius Constantine intends to restore the patriarch for the purpose of renewing tribute (but in expectation, we should also note, of a subsequent military campaign under Theodore); but in the Constantinopolitan source, the purpose is instead the negotiation of a peace with the Muslims—tribute is not mentioned—and the establishment of a “a law of governance” fit for Egypt. What that phrase intends is not at all clear. It seems improbable that the Romans would have imagined the province's total and permanent surrender, and we might suppose that the patriarch's first imperative was to prevent the further loss of territories in the Delta, perhaps through the reestablishment of tribute (and perhaps also in expectation of later attempts to integrate the Muslim leadership through the traditional mechanisms of Roman client management).¹³⁷ The *Chronicle* points to an almost immediate opposition to this approach. Thus the opening lines of chapter 120—which continues the narrative of Cyrus' recall in 119, and which again belongs, I have argued, to the Constantinopolitan source—describe a controversial council which gathered in the capital before the patriarch's departure, in the summer of 641:

Cyrus (kirs) the Chalcedonian patriarch was not the only one who desired reconciliation (ʿarq) with the Muslims (ʿaṣlām). But all the people (sabʿə) and patricians (baṭārḡāt) and Dəmyānos,¹³⁸ whom the empress Martina loved, gathered together and took counsel with

136. For Philagrius as imperial *sacellarius* in the late reign of Heraclius see above n. 57. On the emerging role of the imperial *sacellarius* see BRANDES 2002, pp. 427–42.

137. Cf. the discussion in MORELLI 2010, pp. 146–7.

138. ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 453 and CHARLES 1916, p. 191 translate this as “Domentianus,” suggesting therefore that this person is identical with the person who appears in Egypt and Alexandria throughout the later chapters, and is otherwise presented as Cyrus' opponent, deposed upon his return to Alexandria (see below p. 33). Domentianus' name appears under a number of forms in Ethiopic: *londayos*, *ləməndəyos*, *luməndyānos*, *daməndəyānos*, *dəməndəwos*, *dəməndəyos* (the variation on “l” and “d” derives from a simple misreading of Coptic) but only once as *dəmyānos*. Should we therefore read “Damian” here rather than “Domentianus” (as in ALTHEIM & STIEHL 1971, p. 372 n. 100)? Perhaps, but later in chapter 120 we are presented with a similar formulation as that witnessed here, when Valentine “took Dəməndyānos and other patricians (*baṭārḡāt*) with him” when he crowned Constans (ed. Zotenberg p. 216). It seems therefore that this person (Damian/Domentianus) is a prominent

*the patriarch Cyrus in order to realise a reconciliation (ʿarq) with the Muslims (ʿaslām). But all the officials (sabʿə śəyyumān) began to despise the rule of the younger Heraclius (ḥərqāl zayən)əs*¹³⁹ *and to say, “It is not fitting that an emperor from an abominable seed rules.”*¹⁴⁰

The text therefore describes a clear distinction between the *batārqāt* (no doubt rendering the Arabic بطارقة, a generic word for people of importance) and the *sabʿə śəyyumān*. Zotenberg and, following him, Charles translated the latter phrase as “le clergé,” but it is not an ecclesiastical term, and is used in the text to designate a range of secular officials.¹⁴¹ Although it is difficult to reconstruct the precise Greek/Coptic terms here, it is nevertheless quite evident that significant divisions existed amongst the upper echelons of the capital’s elite, and that those divisions were informed through different approaches to the attempts to realise peace with the Muslims in Egypt. In the immediate aftermath of the aforementioned council, the Constantinopolitan source reports, rebels against the regime sent messages to the troops on Rhodes who were escorting Cyrus to Alexandria, perhaps in an attempt to prevent his return and, with it, the negotiations for peace with the Muslims.

We can infer that two inter-related issues informed this opposition, besides the potential personal or moral opprobrium directed towards Martina and her sons: on the one hand, renewed fiscal anxieties concerning the agreement of tribute; and, on the other, military concerns at the apparent abandonment of the war effort. The imperial *sacellarius* Philagrius, the reported *éminence grise* of Cyrus’ earlier deposition, was in disgrace, but the person whom both the *History to 641* and the *Chronicle* present as his closest associate, Valentine, now led the opposition to the new regime and its policies, and advocated not peace but direct confrontation. Thus, in the third section of its narrative, where the *History*’s narrative has given out, the *Chronicle*’s Constantinopolitan source describes Valentine’s brief assumption of the purple, before popular pressure forced him to renounce it, and to swear to Constans that he meant no harm. For our purposes, the terms of his oath are striking: “I have not done this for evil,” he states, “but in order that I might wage war on the Muslims (ʿaslām).”¹⁴² We note, therefore, that his imperial aspirations here derive from a desire for a more aggressive stance towards the caliphate.

Although the *Chronicle* does not go on to describe the fulfilment of that desire, from other texts it seems certain that Valentine did indeed soon lead an expedition against the invaders. Under Constans’ second year (642/3) Ps.-Sebeos also reports Valentine’s attempt to elevate himself to the purple—again “so that having crowned himself he might thus exercise his military command”—but then reports that under “the burden of subjection”

member of the Constantinopolitan elite (senate?) who appeared in the Constantinopolitan source, and whom both Martina and Valentine courted, but who has been confused with an Alexandrian namesake, or near-namesake, in the process of editing and/or transmitting the *Chronicle*.

139. I.e. Heraclonas.

140. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 211).

141. ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 453; CHARLES 1916, p. 191. Cf. ALTHEIM & STIEHL 1971, p. 373: “alle hochgestellten Männer.”

142. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 218).

(increased taxation?) the capital's inhabitants rose up and executed him.¹⁴³ This report, however, seems to conflate two episodes: first, a brief period in which Valentine had assumed the purple under the pretext of confronting the Muslims (as described also *Chronicle*, and referred to also in a text associated with the trial of Pope Martin in 654);¹⁴⁴ and, second, his later rebellion and subsequent death, which Theophanes and the *Chronicle to 1234* report in brief and situate in the period c. 644–5.¹⁴⁵ Between these episodes, however, the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* reports under AG 955 (643/4) that the “patrician Valentine” marched out against the Muslims, but fled upon their approach.¹⁴⁶ In Constantinople, therefore, the factionalism described in the sources embedded in Nicephorus and in John of Nikiu had a further dimension besides that of simple power politics: it was also informed through competing attitudes to the attempted use of force as a solution to the Muslim invasions.¹⁴⁷

THE UNIONIST REVIVAL

The combined evidence of Nicephorus (or, the *History to 641*) and John of Nikiu (or, the Constantinopolitan source) suggests that from the late reign of Heraclius to the accession of Constans II, Constantinople was divided between two competing factions: the allies of Martina (Heraclonas and his brothers, the patriarchs Pyrrhus and Cyrus, David the Translator, perhaps Kubrat) and those of Heraclius Constantine (his sons, Valentine, Philagrius, Euthalius). It is tempting to regard this division as the simple inheritance of Heraclius' reign, the inevitable consequence of the preponderance of sons (and half-brothers) now within the imperial college. We have seen, however, that such factionalism was far more complex than competing familial or political ambitions, and that it also reflected fundamental divergences in attitudes to the costs, both fiscal and strategic, of peace with the Muslims. But I will now further argue that these political divergences were also bound up with another problem: that of the empire's remaining anti-Chalcedonians.

Since Cyrus' spectacular union with the Egyptian Severan church in 633—which served as the capstone of a wider programme of Heraclian unions in the aftermath of the Persian retreat from Roman territories—the irenic doctrine of Christ's single operation (monenergism) had met with immediate dissent in certain Chalcedonian circles, in particular in the Palestinian ascetic group around Sophronius of Jerusalem, with

143. Ps.-Sebeōs, *History* 44 (ed. Abgaryan pp. 142–3), transl. R. Thomson in THOMSON & HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, I pp. 106–7. Earlier in the chapter Valentine is called an Arsacid and general of Heraclius Constantine, who killed Martina and her sons and elevated Constans, before heading to the east (*ibid.* p. 104).

144. See Theodore Spudaeus, *Narrations* 17.

145. Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6136 (= 644/5); *Anonymous Chronicle to 1234* 126 (AG 955 = 643/4).

146. *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (ed. Chabot 1927–1965, II p. 151). It is possible that this expedition should be identified with the failed anti-Muslim expedition of “Valentine” referred to in Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.10 (ed. Chabot IV p. 428) and *Chronicle to 1234* 122–3 (deriving from Dionysius of Tel Mahre), but placed there under AG 951 (639/40).

147. Cf. the observations of HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, p. 248 for the same point. Also below n. 200.

whom this article began. This dissent was such that the emperor and Constantinopolitan Patriarch Sergius soon banned discussion on the Christological operation(s) altogether, in a document, the *Psephos*, promulgated in late 633 or early 634.¹⁴⁸ But soon after, in the light of continuing discussions, Heraclius had issued a further document or *Ekthesis*, which repeated the ban on discussing operations, but also asserted the single will of Christ (monotheletism).¹⁴⁹ Modern scholarship has often supposed that monotheletism was an attempt to revive the failing monenergist formula, to maintain the union with the anti-Chalcedonian churches in the face of dissent. But its more immediate context seems rather to have been an *intra*-Chalcedonian one, that is, the rush to restore Chalcedonian consensus through the promulgation of a formula which its architects, perhaps, considered uncontroversial. Rather than a rash innovation, it seems instead to have been a simple extension to a fleeting statement contained within the *Psephos*, that two opposed wills cannot coexist in Christ.¹⁵⁰

In all this, it must be emphasised that the imperative behind Constantinople doctrinal manoeuvring was not some statist desire to enforce absolute adherence to particular religious formulae; it was rather to maintain, as much as possible, religious consensus. Recent research on the monenergist and monothelete controversies which raged in the 630s and 640s has emphasised a significant ideological divide between the proponents and opponents of the doctrines: the former were those who saw the universal communion of the entire Christian faithful as the most pressing religious imperative (in the context of the rise of Islam), and who advocated accommodation, *oikonomia*, in doctrinal matters; the latter, those who saw the exclusive communion of the Chalcedonian faithful as the most pressing religious imperative (also in the context of the rise of Islam), and who advocated exactitude, *akribeia*, in doctrinal matters.¹⁵¹ As the 630s progressed, however, the focus of Constantinopolitan *oikonomia* seems to have shifted: from the attempts to appease the anti-Chalcedonians throughout the eastern provinces, to the attempts to appease the Chalcedonian dissenters against the new initiative.

For a brief period in 641, however, it appears that the direction of this doctrinal drift was reversed. From the *Chronicle* we ascertain that Cyrus' restoration to Alexandria marked the renewal of not one but two policies: first, his appeasement of the Muslims; and, second, his rapprochement with the enemies of Chalcedon. Chapter 119 prefaces its account of the patriarch's restoration under Heraclonas with an extensive report of a conflict in Alexandria, "on account of love of office (*šimāt*) and other reasons," between the official Domentianus (*šayyūm dāmāndyānos*) and the general Menas (*minās mak^wannān*).¹⁵² The *Chronicle* describes how Menas allied himself with the general Theodore, and explains his opposition to Domentianus with reference to the latter's abandonment of the troops at Nikiu (described in chapter 118); soon after it is said that Menas disliked Domentianus

148. For the circumstances, see BOOTH 2013a, pp. 209–15.

149. For the circumstances, see JANKOWIAK 2009, pp. 146–9, 155–60.

150. See BOOTH 2013a, pp. 264–5. See also my comments in PRICE, BOOTH & CUBITT 2014, pp. 18–27.

151. See OHME 2008; developed in BOOTH 2013a, pp. 218–22 and again in OHME 2015.

152. For the possible positions of the various Egyptian officials mentioned in this section, see the useful discussion of CARRIÉ 1998, pp. 118–20 (but note that he depends on the often imprecise translations of Zotenberg).

because he had once proposed a scheme to reduce the number of soldiers established on the land. The account of these rivalries continues to explain that Menas was also aggrieved at Domentianus' brother Eudocianus (*ʾawdakyānos*), who is blamed for the persecution of the orthodox at Easter, that is, the event described in brief in chapter 117.¹⁵³ Philiadēs¹⁵⁴ the official (*śayyūm*) of the region of Arcadia, so the *Chronicle* continues, then came to Alexandria and entered under the protection of Menas, who honoured him because he was the brother of the patriarch George (*giyorgis liqa pāppāsāt*). Philiadēs, however, turned against Menas and plotted against him, but was soon confronted (for reasons which are not made clear) with a popular riot, which Domentianus countered with a dispatch of members of the Blue faction (*ʾəlwānuṭs*), resulting in a running battle. As a result, according to the *Chronicle*, Theodore deposed Domentianus and established one "Arṭānā master of the ten grades, who is called Furyāns."¹⁵⁵

A crucial aside at the beginning of this account reports that Cyrus and Domentianus, who was the patriarch's son-in-law, had once been on good terms, but Domentianus had thereafter started to oppose him, "for no reason." This seems to place the patriarch on the side of Menas and his allies. But when did all this occur? Because of the appearance of Domentianus, who also features through chapters 112–8, it seems certain that this account belonged within the earlier scheme of the *Chronicle*. But since this material does not appear within the rubrics, it is difficult to place within that scheme—I have suggested in the table above that it once served to introduce the original chapter 121, but this is far from certain.¹⁵⁶ In chronological terms, however, it is notable that some of the tensions described are ascribed to Domentianus' abandonment of Nikiu on the eve of its conquest, which means that those tensions must have been active, at least, in the summer of 641, before Cyrus' return in September. This suggestion is further supported in the *Chronicle's* fleeting reference to "the patriarch George." This "George" also appears in the patriarchal lists for Alexandria, where he is presented as the predecessor of Cyrus, and given a tenure of either four or fourteen years.¹⁵⁷ The *Chronicle* makes clear, however, that George was Cyrus' replacement as patriarch, while the latter himself was absent in exile. Thus, a little later in the text, while relating Cyrus' arrival in Alexandria, the *Chronicle* pauses to reflect upon the situation before his reinstatement: "Before the arrival of the patriarch (*bābā*)

153. Pace ALTHEIM & STIEHL 1971, pp. 368–71, who attempt to distinguish a Domitius from a Domitianos within these sections. It is quite evident that these are the same person.

154. This person appears under various Ethiopic forms in *Chronicle* 119 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 209–10): *ʾabəlyās*, *fəlyāds*, *filədyās*, *fiyāds*.

155. The original designations which lie behind the Ethiopic of the latter person's names are at present unclear. For *arṭānā* ALTHEIM & STIEHL 1971, p. 371 n. 98 suggest ἄρχων (from the Arabic accusative *arḥānā*), which is not cogent. More compelling is the suggestion that *furyāns* (فوريانس) is from Arabic = *decuriones*, and that the original text read "master of the ten orders, who are called decurions." On the meaning of *ʾəlwānuṭs* as "Blues" see BOOTH 2011.

156. This is based upon the ascription of certain tensions to Domentianus' abandonment of Nikiu before its conquest, which is described in rubric and chapter 118. This seems to discount the possibility that it once appeared in chapter 117, as part of the description of the factionalism and strife which brought down the Muslim conquest.

157. Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6111–24 and Nicephorus, *Chronography* (ed. de Boor p. 129) both give him fourteen years; while Eutychius, *Annals (Alexandrian recension)* 31 (ed. Breydy p. 133) gives him four, from the first year of ʿUmar = 634/5.

Cyrus, George was glorified by (*baḥaba*) the lord Anastasius. For that man [Anastasius] received office from Heraclius the Younger (*ḥarqāl ḥaddis*), and when he grew older he wielded power over all. The patriarch (*liqa pāppāsāt*), moreover, also granted him power.”¹⁵⁸ The precise meaning of the passage is unclear: “Heraclius the Younger” should indicate Heraclonas (but is perhaps a mistake for his father?);¹⁵⁹ *liqa pāppāsāt* appears to mean George;¹⁶⁰ and the “lord” Anastasius is the official who appears twice in earlier chapters of the conquest section.¹⁶¹ Perhaps it was intended as a simple comment on the good relations which existed between George and Anastasius, the leading sacred and secular figures in Alexandria, during Cyrus’ absence; but it seems without doubt to demonstrate that George was patriarch before Cyrus’ return.¹⁶²

This suggests, therefore, that the tensions described in the opening part of chapter 119, in which George also features, at least culminated, if not originated, during Cyrus’ absence from Alexandria. Indeed, within the *Chronicle*’s chapter 120 the patriarch’s return marks the apotheosis of these Alexandrian rivalries, and with it the final defeat of Domentianus. Thus, after a strange anecdote which reports Theodore’s failed attempt to reach the Pentapolis from Rhodes—which there is good reason to regard as the later editor’s rather inept attempt to reconcile his two texts, and which serves as a bridge between them¹⁶³—the text relates how, upon Cyrus’ arrival at Alexandria in September 641,

158. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 212).

159. In one instance ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 216 with n. 2 alters the mss to read “Heraclonas” (*ḥarkʷʿalnās*, from an original [*la*]kʷʿarlnās). Otherwise Heraclonas is throughout called “Heraclius” (*ḥarqāl*), but is called “Heraclius the Younger” (*ḥaddis*) again later in the chapter (ed. Zotenberg p. 215). Earlier he is twice called “the younger Heraclius” (*ḥarqāl ʿanza nʿus* or *zayʿanʿas*); see p. 17 above. But this reading makes little sense of the account of Anastasius’ career here. I would prefer, therefore, to think that in the original this intended “Heraclius I,” Heraclonas’ father, and that a mistake or alteration has occurred. In these later sections, Heraclius I is four times called “the elder Heraclius” (*ḥarqāl zayaʿabbi*) (ed. Zotenberg pp. 204, 211, 216, 217). But in earlier sections of the *Chronicle* he is called “the younger Heraclius” (*ḥarqāl nʿus* or *zayʿanʿas*) to distinguish him from his own father; see e.g. *Chronicle* 109.110 (ed. Zotenberg p. 196). The opportunities for confusion in transmission were therefore quite considerable.

160. As we have seen above, the title *liqa pāppāsāt* is but once applied to Cyrus; in all other instances he is labelled *bābā*. See above n. 88.

161. See *Chronicle* 111, 116. In the former he is also called “lord” (*ʿagziʿ*) (ed. Zotenberg p. 199); in the latter Heraclius Constantine summons him to Constantinople when Cyrus is (intended to be) recalled from exile (see above n. 85).

162. *Pace* ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 451 n. 1, p. 454 n. 3; BUTLER 1902, p. 191 n. 1.

163. See *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 211–2): “Thereafter [the rebels in Constantinople] sent secretly to the island of Rhodes (*ruṭṣ*) saying to the troops who went with the patriarch Cyrus (*kirs bābā*) ‘Return to the imperial city, and do not go with him.’ Moreover they sent to Theodore the official (*ṣayyūm*) of Alexandria saying, ‘Do not listen to the word of Martina, and do not obey her children.’ Moreover they sent [such messages] to Africa and to every place under Roman authority. Theodore the general (*makʷannan*) when he heard this rejoiced and hid the matter in his heart. He went during the night without anyone knowing, and he planned to go to the Pentapolis from the island of Rhodes, and he told it only to the ship’s captain. But the ship’s captain pretended, saying, ‘The wind is against us.’ He entered the city of Alexandria during the night of the 17th of Maskaram...” There are several problems with this narrative: if Theodore had wished to reach the Pentapolis, this would surely have been somehow possible; and in the subsequent narrative he appears in Alexandria alongside Cyrus, who is otherwise implied to have been abandoned on Rhodes. It seems clear, in fact, that Theodore remained in Alexandria or surrounding regions throughout Cyrus’ absence; see esp.

the patriarch soon summoned Menas and appointed him “general” (*mak^w annan*) and banished Domentianus from Alexandria—confirming the patriarch’s political allegiances and once again suggesting that Theodore’s deposition of Domentianus, as related at the culmination of the political tensions described in chapter 119, occurred soon before the patriarch’s return.¹⁶⁴

The account of the struggles between Domentianus and his rivals in chapter 119 concludes with a tantalising sentence: “It was said that this battle and quarrel (*hakak*) were on account of the faith.”¹⁶⁵ What were these tensions? The *Chronicle* is not explicit, but the combined witness of various asides makes it evident that they revolved around competing attitudes to Egypt’s anti-Chalcedonians. Thus the first act of Cyrus upon his return to Alexandria, which the *Chronicle* presents as the cause of great celebration, was to renew his commitment to the doctrinal union of 633. It is true that at the end of the *Chronicle*’s chapter 116, after the aforementioned anecdote on the Gaianites at Taposiris Magna, the text refers to Cyrus’ renewed persecution, upon his return, of the orthodox. But this section of text bears all the signs of being a later gloss, and has perhaps been imposed to bring the text into line with the miaphysites’ later characterisation of Cyrus as a grand persecutor.¹⁶⁶ (Whether John of Nikiu himself is responsible for this gloss depends on how we comprehend the editorial processes which have produced the current text, a point to which we shall return.)¹⁶⁷ The Gaianites—that is, Egypt’s anti-Severan, Julianist miaphysites—perhaps had good reason to despise Cyrus, and it is probable that this group was indeed marginalised, perhaps even persecuted, in 633, when Egypt’s pro-Severan miaphysites (or “Theodosians”) entered into union with Cyrus.¹⁶⁸ But that the patriarch’s later return from exile did not entail the renewal of a grand anti-miaphysite persecution is indicated within the *Chronicle* itself. Thus, when chapter 120 describes the actual return of the patriarch, it is notable that his first act is to retreat, with Theodore, to a “Church of the Theodosians” (*tāʾodosāwṃān*), that is, of the Severans with whom he

Chronicle 118–9, where he features in the defence of Caesarea and of Alexandria. I would suggest that the Constantinopolitan source indeed reported seditious messages being sent to Theodore in Alexandria, and perhaps being welcomed, but that the editor has then assumed him to be on Rhodes with Cyrus. Knowing from the original text of the *Chronicle* that the pair were then together in Alexandria, he has invented an anecdote which explains Theodore’s failure to rebel, but which also serves as a link between the two sources. For this reason, the suggestion of Butler and Charles that in *Chronicle* 116 Heraclius Constantine’s summons of “Anastasius” to Constantinople should be replaced with “Theodore” seems unwarranted; see above n. 85.

164. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 212).

165. See *Chronicle* 119 (ed. Zotenberg p. 210).

166. See *Chronicle* 116 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 205–6): “But God who guards justice did not disregard the world, but avenged the oppressed and showed no compassion to those who had acted treacherously against him, and he delivered them into the hand of the Ishmaelites. Thereafter the Muslims rose up and took the whole province of Egypt (*hagara masr*) captive. After Heraclius’ death and the return of the patriarch Cyrus (*kiros bābā*) he did not abandon the anger and persecution against the people of God, but began to heap evil upon evil.” A similar statement occurs in the opening to *Chronicle* 121. For Cyrus as persecutor in Coptic or Copto-Arabic texts see above n. 23.

167. See the discussion below pp. 43–4.

168. See above pp. 4, 28.

had entered into union in the previous decade.¹⁶⁹ (Note that Zotenberg and Charles once again obscure this crucial piece of information, offering “Tabionnésiotés” or “monks of Tabenna” instead.)¹⁷⁰ Cyrus’ restoration, therefore, seems to have signalled the renewal not of persecution, but rather of rapprochement.

It is therefore quite striking that the *Chronicle* also presents the patriarch’s enemies in Alexandria as opponents of his doctrinal programme. As we have seen above, the Gaianite episode in chapter 116 ends with its violent suppression at the hand of one “Eudocianus,” and in chapter 117 the Muslim incursion and the fall of the fortress at Babylon are associated with a simultaneous abuse of certain “orthodox” prisoners at Easter 641, who were scourged and whose hands were removed (their description as “orthodox,” we should note, seems to distinguish them from the Gaianites in the previous chapter). In chapter 119, however, when the *Chronicle* describes the factionalism which pervaded Alexandria, it states that Menas, the arch-rival of Domentianus, “was very much angry with Eudocianus (*ʿawḍakyānos*) the elder brother of Domentianus the official (*ṣayyūm*), for the reason that he sinned against the people of the Christians during the Holy Passion (*ḥamāmāt qədāst*), on account of the faith.”¹⁷¹ The person responsible for the outrages against the orthodox at Easter, therefore, was none other than the brother of Domentianus, an explicit opponent of Cyrus and the principal political victim of his restoration; while the person whom the patriarch promoted upon his return, Menas, was a noted critic of the persecution of anti-Chalcedonians. The patriarch’s return, therefore, signalled not the restoration of a hated persecutor of the anti-Chalcedonian “orthodox,” but rather the return of a benevolent protector.

MARTINA AND THE MIAPHYSITES

In restoring the patriarch Cyrus to Alexandria, Martina and Heraclonas cannot have been unaware of his status as the genius of the union of 633 and, as we have seen, the *Chronicle* suggests that upon his arrival in Alexandria, the patriarch at once renewed his commitment to the Theodosians. Was Martina, therefore, complicit in the patriarch’s doctrinal manoeuvres? The evidence is indirect, but a cache of contemporaneous letters from Carthage suggests that within two months of the patriarch’s return, Martina herself was also involved in a prominent attempt to appease certain groups of anti-Chalcedonian Egyptians. That cache is contained within the corpus of Maximus Confessor, and is related to the North African prefect George and the so-called “affair of the nuns.”¹⁷² Maximus recounts the central details of that affair in his *Letter* 12 to John Cubicularius, written soon after November 641, and dispatched from Carthage to Constantinople. He reports that, in anticipation of the Muslim conquest of Egypt—and so *c.* 636–40—the nuns from two miaphysite communities in Alexandria had fled to North Africa, and there entered into communion with the Chalcedonian church, and were rewarded with

169. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 212). Soon after Cyrus retrieves a cross from a “Monastery of the Theodosians” (ed. Zotenberg p. 212).

170. ZOTENBERG 1883, p. 454; CHARLES 1916, pp. 192–3.

171. See *Chronicle* 119 (ed. Zotenberg p. 209).

172. For a full discussion of all the related documents see JANKOWIAK & BOOTH 2015, pp. 51–8.

certain gifts. Soon however the nuns broke that communion, and George reported their lapse to the emperor and the Constantinopolitan and Roman patriarchs, who replied with a command that he remove all heretics from the province and, if the nuns should prove unrepentant, to distribute them among orthodox monasteries. (Note that the mention of an incumbent pope suggests a date after May 640, since the see had been vacant since the death of Honorius in October 638, while Constantinople refused to approve the election of his successor Severinus.)¹⁷³ George executed the order and placed the recalcitrant nuns in Chalcedonian communities, but in November 641 he received a letter from the “Patricia” Martina ordering the nuns’ release. George, however, refused the empress’ command, and instead Maximus wrote to his correspondent in the capital, John, to explain the prefect’s insubordination.¹⁷⁴

Maximus’ *Letter* 12 provides a useful précis of events, but several other letters within his corpus relate to the same affair. Some of these are quite simple to place within the narrative described: in particular, *Letter* 18 belongs to the aftermath of the nuns’ break from communion, when George via Maximus’ pen warns them of the potential consequences of their *volte face*.¹⁷⁵ Other pieces, however, are more complicated. Thus a series of letters—in particular 1, 16, and 44–5—belongs to a context in which George has been recalled to Constantinople, under some evident suspicion: in *Letter* 1 Maximus wishes him well while he is en route to the capital;¹⁷⁶ in 16 he refers to the calumnies which George endures;¹⁷⁷ and in 44–5 he writes twice to John Cubicularius, praising the prefect’s diverse virtues in the face of evident criticism, and emphasising, we should also note, his commitment to the empire and his zeal for the orthodox faith (*Letter* 45 seems to have been written when no response was forthcoming to *Letter* 44, suggesting a substantial separation in time between them).¹⁷⁸

When should we place George’s summons to Constantinople? Some scholars have thought that it must have occurred in response to his refusal of Martina’s request to release the nuns, so that the sequence of relevant letters occurs after Maximus’ *Letter* 12 (and thus after November 641).¹⁷⁹ But this is difficult for several reasons. Based upon a compelling

173. For the death of Honorius and succession of Severinus see *Book of pontiffs* 72–3 with Maximus Confessor, *Letter to Thalassius* (PL 129 583D–586B) for the Constantinopolitan refusal to recognise the latter, and JANKOWIAK & BOOTH 2015, pp. 59–60, no. 58 for discussion.

174. See Maximus Confessor, *Letter* 12 (PG 91 col. 460A–509B). The proper address for Martina was not “Patricia” but “Augusta.” It is possible that George was conscious of the wider attempt to destabilise the regime, for the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu describes how dissidents in the capital sent secret missives encouraging rebellion: first, to the troops on Rhodes with Cyrus; second, to Theodore of Alexandria; and third, to North Africa (*ʿafrāqyā*) and other provinces; see above p. 30.

175. Maximus Confessor, *Letter* 18 (PG 91 col. 584D–589B).

176. Maximus Confessor, *Letter* 1 (PG 91 col. 364A–392B). One manuscript (*Laurent. Phil.* 57.7) calls the addressee George “former prefect of Africa” (Γεώργιον γενόμενον ἑπαρχὸν Ἀφρικῆς), perhaps in acknowledgement of his deposition.

177. Maximus Confessor, *Letter* 16 (PG 91 col. 576D–580B, at 576D–577A).

178. Maximus Confessor, *Letters* 44 (PG 91 col. 641D–648C, at 648C); 45 (col. 648D–649C). The latter asks the emperors “not to listen to the unjust tongues of lawless men” (col. 649B).

179. See e.g. SHERWOOD 1952, pp. 49–51. In our recent “New date-list” of Maximus’ works, Marek Jankowiak and I offer two solutions to the problem of where to place these letters: he favours the period after *Letter* 12; I the period before it, for reasons I offer here. See the full discussion in JANKOWIAK & BOOTH 2015, pp. 51–3.

reconstruction of the imperial Necrologium contained in the *Chronicon Altinate*,¹⁸⁰ Warren Treadgold has argued that Martina's fall, and the accession of Constans II, occurred in November 641, the same month in which Martina's letter was received in North Africa; this date is far from certain, but it is supported in John of Nikiu's *Chronicle* which, as we have seen above, suggests that Martina's fall occurred in close connection with the resignation of Pyrrhus and consecration of Paul, on the 1st October 641.¹⁸¹ In this case, therefore, the change of regime would have occurred before the reception of Maximus' letter, and there would then have been little reason to recall George, an opponent of Martina, under a cloud of suspicion. *Letters* 44–5, furthermore, contain references to "emperors," and this would make little sense if Maximus were conscious of the accession of Constans and the fall of Heraclonas and his mother.¹⁸²

A seductive alternative is to discard Treadgold's rereading of the *Chronicon Altinate* and project Martina's fall into the first months of 642, thus freeing up some more time for the successful execution of a command to arrest the prefect, and Maximus' subsequent dispatch of *Letters* 1, 44, and 45, before news had reached North Africa of the change in regime.¹⁸³ But that solution still leaves us with a difficult schedule of events over the winter of 641/2, during the *mare clausum*: in or soon after November 641, the dispatch of Maximus' *Letter* 12 and its reception in the capital; the issuing of a command that the prefect be arrested; and the arrival of that command and departure of George for Constantinople.¹⁸⁴ We must then also suppose that, although these missives could travel back and forth with apparent ease, Maximus' *Letters* 1, 44, and 45 were all then dispatched, over an extended period of time, before news of events within the capital could once again reach North Africa.

The second scenario is not impossible, but all these difficulties can be avoided if we instead place George's absence in the capital *before* November 641, and assume that he survived his summons there so as to be restored. Indeed, in *Letter* 18, which must date before November 641, George warns the errant nuns that he might raise their case with "the emperors and patriarchs" at an imminent audience, suggesting that he had been summoned to Constantinople.¹⁸⁵ We should then place George's presence in the capital at some point between the summer of 640, the *terminus post quem* of *Letter* 18, and November 641 or soon after, the date of *Letter* 12, when he has returned to North Africa once more, perhaps bearing the aforementioned imperial command to rid the

180. See TREADGOLD 1990, p. 433.

181. For Paul's consecration see above n. 59. For John of Nikiu's evidence see above p. 21.

182. Maximus Confessor, *Letters* 44 (PG 91 col. 648C); 45 (col. 649B).

183. This solution is explored in JANKOWIAK & BOOTH 2015, pp. 52–3. In this case the absolute *terminus ante quem* for Martina's fall would be Easter 642, since John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 120 is unambiguous that Martina had fallen before Cyrus' death.

184. For the sailing season (April to October) see the discussion in e.g. McCORMICK 2001, pp. 450–68.

185. Maximus Confessor, *Letter* 18 (col. 589A): "And again, if something is presented to our most pious, Christ-loving, and all-clement emperors, and to the most holy patriarchs, when they learn through me (when, God willing, I am beside their serenity) that the whole affair around has happened because of your apostasy, and great wickedness and arrogance, I would judge this to be good. For I shall not keep such evil silent." Does the strange reference to "patriarchs" indicate a period in which both Sergius and Cyrus were known to be in Constantinople?

province of heretics. Can we be more precise? Given the prefect's evident opposition to Martina, it is doubtful, though not impossible, that he owed his restoration to her and her son Heraclonas. It seems a reasonable supposition, therefore, that George was recalled in the late summer or autumn of 640, spent the winter in Constantinople (or perhaps in brief exile), and was restored under Heraclius Constantine, before the latter's death in April 641.¹⁸⁶

We thus note that George's name can perhaps be added to the list of provincial administrators who were summoned to the capital in the late reign of Heraclius; and that his subsequent political fortunes, like those of Cyrus, fluctuated according to the swings of the political pendulum within Constantinople. What was the reason for his recall? The enumeration of the prefect's virtues in Maximus' *Letters* 44–5, sent to an imperial *cubicularius* in the capital, suggest that the same summons had occurred under both political and doctrinal suspicion. Although the precise details are obscure, George might well have invited imperial opprobrium. As we have seen above, Maximus' master Sophronius had led the charge against Heraclius' unionist initiative, and from c. 640, after a brief period of doctrinal quiescence, and despite Constantinopolitan efforts to conciliate its critics, Maximus had inherited his master's doctrinal mantle and launched from North Africa a public opposition to the doctrine of "one will" contained within the *Ekthesis*.¹⁸⁷ Here in the West the prefect George was the principal protector of Maximus and his monastic allies.¹⁸⁸ It is perhaps not coincidental, therefore, that George was soon summoned to Constantinople.

Although George survived that summons, in November 641 he had—no doubt with Maximus' encouragement—once again opposed the doctrinal politics of the capital in resisting the command of Martina to release those anti-Chalcedonians nuns whom he had imprisoned. Maximus' *Letter* 12 provides a precious witness to the whole affair; but it also affords a rare perspective on Martina's doctrinal inclinations. For besides revealing her evident concern to prevent the undue persecution of Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians—even to the extent of intervening in a distant dispute concerning some otherwise obscure refugees in Carthage—Maximus also informs us that the empress was rumoured to be enthralled to a prominent, anti-Chalcedonian bishop, and warns of the consequences of fraternising with heretics.¹⁸⁹ Seen in concert with Cyrus' renewed initiative in Alexandria, therefore, Martina's actions seem to indicate the renewal of the unionist initiative within Egyptian miaphysite circles, at the same moment that the armies of Islam were casting an ever-looming shadow over Alexandria.

Indeed, Martina's opponents in the capital, as well as opposing the attempt to make peace with the Muslims in Egypt, seem also to have opposed her doctrinal manoeuvres. In later texts it is suggested that Heraclius Constantine was "orthodox," perhaps indicating his opposition to monenergism and monotheletism—this, of course, would support our

186. For this date see the discussion above at n. 75.

187. See JANKOWIAK & BOOTH 2015, pp. 46–51, 58–61; also JANKOWIAK 2013b.

188. For the prefect George and his relation with the Palestinian exiles, including Sophronius and Maximus, see BOOTH 2013a, pp. 110–1, 151–2.

189. Maximus Confessor, *Letter* 12 (PG 91 col. 460A–465D). Maximus calls the bishop "Thomas" (col. 461A), who is otherwise unknown.

suggestion that he was responsible for George's restoration;¹⁹⁰ but since the opponents of those doctrines also fabricated such claims about the late leanings of Heraclius, little store should perhaps be set in them.¹⁹¹ More concrete is the fall of Pyrrhus. Despite the attempted obfuscations of the *History to 641*, it is clear that Pyrrhus was a crucial ally of the empress, and his fall was a manifestation of the fracturing of her political control. It is however possible that her enemies had targeted him for something more than his political allegiance to Martina. Although the *History to 641* maintains a studied but perhaps pregnant silence on his involvement in doctrinal matters, since becoming patriarch in late 638 Pyrrhus had attempted to deflect Chalcedonian criticism of the *Ekthesis*;¹⁹² and there is good reason to suppose that he might also have supported an attempt to renew doctrinal initiatives in anti-Chalcedonian communities. When Sophronius had first launched his opposition to Cyrus' Alexandrian union in 633, and Sergius had issued the *Psephos*, Pyrrhus—perhaps in his role as *syncellus* to the Constantinopolitan patriarch¹⁹³—had written to Sophronius' most prominent disciple, Maximus, to defend monenergist doctrine, and produced a huge tome to support his master's position.¹⁹⁴ The patriarch, therefore, was one of the earliest champions of the Heraclian unions. Was his removal also bound up with the doctrinal politics of Heraclonas' court?

The evidence permits no more than speculation, but striking in this regard is the unique vignette contained within the concluding section of the *Chronicle's* Constantinopolitan source. This claims that after Constans' accession as sole emperor Valentine, the arch-antagonist of Heraclonas and Martina, attempted to summon (the in fact deceased) Arcadius, archbishop of Cyprus, stating: "He was allied with Martina and the patriarch Pyrrhus (*bers liqa pāppāsāt*), and rebelled against the emperor Constans the Younger (*fusṭā nāgus ḥaddis*)."¹⁹⁵ The doctrinal position of Arcadius upon his death

190. See e.g. Zonaras, *Epitome of histories* 14.18 (ed. Dindorf III p. 313). Note also that there survives in three versions a *Letter in defence of Honorius* by Pope John IV (CPG 9383), which was dispatched to Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas, and which distances Honorius from the *Ekthesis*. John might have expected a receptive audience.

191. See the report that Heraclius had retracted the *Ekthesis* in a letter to John IV in Maximus Confessor, *Opusculum* 12 (PG 91 col. 142D–143A); *Record of the trial* ll. 377–9 (ed. Allen & Neil p. 41). In fact the letter defended the doctrine; see ALEXAKIS 1995–1996.

192. See the encyclical letter embedded in the *Acts of the Lateran Council* (ed. Riedinger p. 168), with *Synodicon Vetus* 132 (ed. Duffy & Parker p. 111, with n. 160). Also the *Letter to Pope John IV* cited in *Acts of the Lateran Council* (ed. Riedinger p. 338). For this same letter cf. *Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council* (ed. Riedinger p. 626), where he calls for Chalcedonian unity in the face of anti-Chalcedonian detractors. On his earliest doctrinal position see VAN DIETEN 1972, pp. 57–65.

193. See Nicephorus, *Short history* 26 (with MANGO 1990, p. 190) for the suggestion that Pyrrhus was *syncellus* to Sergius. Nicephorus, *Chronography* (ed. de Boor p. 118) calls him πρεσβύτερος τῆς αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίας μοναχὸς καὶ ἀρχὼν τῶν μοναστηρίων καὶ ἡγούμενος Χρυσόπολεως. Before this it seems he had been a monk in Palestine; see PERTUSI 1958, pp. 14–21.

194. Maximus Confessor, *Letter* 19 (PG 91 col. 589C–597B), which is the response to Pyrrhus' letter. The tome is mentioned in Maximus' apology for *Letter* 19 at *Opusculum* 9 (PG 91 col. 112C–132D), which JANKOWIAK 2009, pp. 182–3 identifies with a "dogmatic tome" read out in the *Acts of the Lateran Council* (ed. Riedinger p. 152), which refers to Sophronius in respectful terms and seems to belong to the earliest stages of the crisis.

195. *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 218). The Ethiopic *fusṭā* is a corruption of the Arabic قسطوس (as in Agapius, *History* [ed. Vasiliev III p. 478]) vel sim. Earlier, however, the text calls Constans

is obscured in later polemic,¹⁹⁶ but in his earlier career at least—as Marek Jankowiak has demonstrated—he was, like Cyrus and Pyrrhus, an arch-proponent of the unionist movement of Heraclius, and a principal enemy of its critics, including Maximus.¹⁹⁷ Upon his triumph over Martina and her allies, therefore, Valentine made the remarkable move of attempting to arrest, on a charge of treason, an episcopal figurehead in the irenic doctrinal politics in which Cyrus and Pyrrhus had been such crucial players, and which Martina seems to have revived. Indeed, the earliest reign of Constans, in which Valentine assumed a dominant role, is significant not for its overtures towards the miaphysites, but rather for the renewed attempts to placate the Chalcedonian critics of the *Ekthesis*.¹⁹⁸

We observe a situation, therefore, in which political divisions were also intertwined with divisions in attitudes to doctrine. By the death of Heraclius in 641, two central policies of the previous decade had been reversed. First, the period of expensive tribute through which the Romans had attempted to prevent the Muslims' expansion after the disastrous defeats of 636—and which, in a context of dwindling imperial resources, and the ever-strengthening grip of the Muslims upon former Roman territories, proved ever more controversial¹⁹⁹—was forgotten in favour of a more aggressive stance;²⁰⁰ and second, the spectacular unionist initiative of the period following the Persian withdrawal from the Near East, which had witnessed the reconciliation of various anti-Chalcedonian churches, was abandoned, as Constantinople made a desperate bid to appease its Chalcedonian critics (including the doomed promulgation of the *Ekthesis*). For a brief period in the aftermath of Heraclius' death, however, as the Muslims made their first significant inroads into Egypt, Martina, Heraclonas, and their allies attempted to salvage the approaches of the previous decade, to prevent the further loss of territories in Egypt, and to resurrect the precious union with the anti-Chalcedonians of Alexandria. The logic is clear: far from stemming the rising Islamic tide, the disgrace of Cyrus had merely led to further

“Constantine” or “the younger Constantine” (*q“aṣṭantānyus na’us*) (ed. Zotenberg p. 216). Upon his accession as sole emperor, however, the text shifts to calling him *fustā* (ed. Zotenberg pp. 217–8).

196. For the diverse attempts of the dyotheletes later to claim him as orthodox see BOOTH 2013a, p. 261 n. 38.

197. JANKOWIAK 2009, pp. 36–40, 62, 139–42. For Arcadius' clash with Maximus and his allies see Sophronius, *Letter to Arcadius of Cyprus* (ed. Albert & Schönborn); George of Resh'aina, *Life of Maximus Confessor* 7–14 (ed. Brock pp. 305–9); also Maximus' letters to Marinus, as discussed in JANKOWIAK & BOOTH 2013a, pp. 46–51.

198. Thus it seems that the patriarch Paul's synodical had condemned Pyrrhus but not mentioned the *Ekthesis*; see Pope Theodore, *Letter to Paul* (PL 87 col. 75–80, at 78A–B). Some sources even suggest (probably erroneously) that Constans had in this period asserted “two operations” and “two wills;” see Constans, *Letter to Pope John*, extant in Karshuni and translated in SCHACHT 1936, pp. 246–9. This was also used in Eutychius, *Annals (Antiochene recension)* (ed. Cheiko pp. 335–9). Note that Paul does not offer a formal defence of monotheletism until May 645, in a letter to Pope Theodore (*Acts of the Lateran Council* [ed. Riedinger p. 205]).

199. See in this context the Armenian-led plot to replace Heraclius with his bastard son Athalaric, describe in Nicephorus, *Short history* 24 and Ps.-Sebeos, *History* 41. Howard-Johnston, in THOMSON & HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, II p. 229 dates this plot to 636/7–640/1, and describes as its object “to install a more energetic and bellicose regime.” On Heraclius' “policy of containment” in the late 630s, attested in a number of independent sources, see also HOYLAND 1997, pp. 585–6.

200. See also HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, pp. 475–7.

disaster; the obvious solution, therefore, was to reinvigorate the policies of which he had been the proponent.

For some, at least, the same logic must have seemed perverse. The coincidence of the union of 633 and the first encroachment of the Muslims into Roman territories had added an indelible taint to the monenergist initiative, and had been a crucial prompt for the emergence of a Chalcedonian opposition, as well as for the initiative's almost instant abrogation in the capital.²⁰¹ The critics of monenergism drew an obvious association between the new doctrine and the rise and expansion of Islam, and no doubt considered that the proper route to God's propitiation, and thus also the restoration of divine favour to the Christian empire, was in the end of Muslim appeasement, the rescindment of Heraclius' unions, and the re-establishment of the Chalcedonian consensus. The appropriate response to the Muslim invasion of Egypt, therefore, was not to restore the expensive and counter-productive peace, nor to revive the fatal communion with the anti-Chalcedonians; but rather to recognise the Muslims as a divine scourge sent to correct deviation from Chalcedon, to restore correct doctrine, and to reinstate the boundaries of God's chosen empire. From this perspective, therefore, the fall of Martina marked something greater than the demise of an empress' aspiration to preserve the throne for her children: it signalled the defeat of that faction which wished to conciliate, and perhaps later integrate, the forces arriving from Arabia; and the final, fleeting chapter in two centuries of imperial attempts to propitiate the enemies of Chalcedon.

CONCLUSION

In a recent article Constantine Zuckerman has shed significant new light on the dynastic rivalries which characterised Constantinople's "year of the four emperors." Revisiting *SB VI 8696*, a mutilated document from Edfu on which he had first published in 1995, Zuckerman offers a convincing defence of his earlier contention that the document belongs to the brief reign of Heraclius Constantine, and that a Fl. Heraclius listed first among the Caesars—alongside David and Martin—is therefore the senior emperor's son Heraclius, the future emperor Constans.²⁰² This in turn permits Zuckerman to reinterpret the three figures who appear on two contemporaneous seals as Heraclius Constantine, his wife Gregoria, and their son Heraclius-Constans (rather than a combination of Martina and Heraclonas with either Heraclius Constantine or Heraclius-Constans); but also to demonstrate the expansion and contraction of the imperial college in the course of 641.²⁰³ *SB VI 8696* provides a vital witness to the otherwise unattested elevation of Heraclius-Constans, under the brief rule of his father, to the rank of Caesar, but also, moreover, to the meaning of the regnal formula of *CPR XXIII 35*. Dated to October or November 641, this document names Heraclonas as emperor and David and Martin as Caesars, so that, upon Heraclius Constantine's death, his son must again have been demoted.²⁰⁴ Heraclius Constantine had therefore issued a provocation to Heraclonas and Martina in elevating

201. See BOOTH 2013a, pp. 186–224.

202. See ZUCKERMAN 2010, pp. 869–71, building from ID. 1995b, *contra* GONIS 2008.

203. ZUCKERMAN 2010, pp. 871–3 (arguing from MORRISSON & SEIBT 1982, pp. 230–3).

204. For this document see above n. 92.

his own son as the leading Caesar; upon his death, however, his opponents had responded in kind and removed him altogether.

This important evidence underlines the obvious pitfalls of our over-dependence upon a limited number of historiographical texts for this period. But I have argued here that the insights to be gained from at least one such text, the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu, are far from exhausted. The *Chronicle*'s crucial chapters 116–20, covering the period after Heraclius' death, have often been seen, not without reason, as confused. This sense of confusion has been compounded in the erroneous choices sometimes made in the current modern translations; but it has also been perpetuated in the failure of modern critics to attempt to comprehend it. Besides the problems which have arisen from the *Chronicle*'s convoluted transmission and abbreviation, the text itself bears witness to the complex editorial processes which have produced the current arrangement of these later chapters. The duplication of material, and the contradictions contained within the different streams, at once suggest the presence of two sources; but comparison with the chapter rubrics—the witness of which almost all scholars have ignored—suggest that the problems are the result of significant alterations made to an earlier organisation. I have argued here that these alterations are the product of a later editor's attempted integration of a substantial source covering political events in Constantinople from 641 to 642, none of which appears in the text of the rubrics.

As it stands, this Constantinopolitan source seems to form a self-contained unit. It focuses on a consistent cast of Constantinopolitan actors; it is framed with the reinstatement and death of the patriarch Cyrus; and it relates events within the capital from his perspective, criticising the actions of those who opposed him.²⁰⁵ It is possible that this source has been excerpted from a larger text, but we might also imagine that it circulated as some sort of short, apologetic pamphlet, distributed in the immediate aftermath of Cyrus' death, when the rivalries described remained relevant. The question of who has integrated this source, and when, is complex, and is bound up with the status of the large chronological lacuna covering 610–c. 639. Is this lacuna original to John of Nikiu's text?²⁰⁶ Although there are clear references within the subsequent chapters to an earlier, lost, narrative,²⁰⁷ it remains possible that the most part of material in chapters 111–20 has derived from a larger single source available to John, upon which he has imposed certain changes: removing, for one reason or another, some or all of the reign of Heraclius,²⁰⁸ and perhaps adding certain glosses to the remaining text, in particular the anti-Chalcedonian asides which punctuate it.²⁰⁹ In this case, therefore, the rubrics are original to the text and our later editor could have integrated the Constantinopolitan

205. In *Chronicle* 119 (ed. Zotenberg pp. 210–1) it is said that the inhabitants of Constantinople “loved” Philagrius and rose up because of his exile; but in the same breath the *sacellarius* is blamed for the “unjust” exile of Cyrus; the abolition of imperial grants to the Church, and its subsequent sickness; and the imposition of higher taxation. In *Chronicle* 120 (ed. Zotenberg p. 218) Valentine is called “the evil-doer” (*gabāre ʿakay*).

206. For different opinions on this question, which tend to underestimate its complexities, cf. e.g. CARILE 1981 p. 112; HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, p. 184.

207. For an example see above n. 77.

208. Cf. BOOTH 2013b, p. 669.

209. See above p. 43.

source soon after the text's completion, having encountered the new information. On the other hand, if the lacuna is not original to the text, then we must imagine a more protracted process for the text's evolution: John of Nikiu's production of a full text; an editor's imposition of the lacuna, with the simultaneous or later addition of the chapter rubrics; and the subsequent integration of the Constantinopolitan source, without the rubrics being altered. The former scenario seems to me the most cogent, and in this case it is possible that John of Nikiu himself is our later editor, and has altered his oeuvre in an attempt (however imperfect or confused) to take account of a new source. There is at present no definitive solution to this problem. But it nevertheless serves as a salient reminder that the *Chronicle* as we have it is far from the original, even besides its abbreviation and translation from Coptic through Arabic to Ethiopic.²¹⁰

It has often been observed that the *Chronicle's* account of events in Constantinople in this period shares certain features with the first part of Nicephorus' *Short history* even that the two might share a source.²¹¹ It is true, as we have seen, that the narratives intersect on various points, but there are also important differences: in particular, the *Chronicle* gives a different account of the fate of Pyrrhus, describes the civil war between David and Euthalius, and extends into the sole rule of Constans. It seems most sensible, then, to adopt the position of James Howard-Johnston: that the two texts comment on the same events from different perspectives, but do not derive from a single model.²¹² Nevertheless, our comparison of Nicephorus' *History to 641* and the *Chronicle's* Constantinopolitan source need not end there. We have seen above that the former functions as an apology for the patriarch Pyrrhus, in a context in which he was aspiring to replace his own successor Paul (c. 646–54): thus the *History* attempts to distance Pyrrhus from Martina and her sons; it obfuscates the actual circumstances of his deposition; and it casts the removal of the patriarch Cyrus—which serves both to prefigure and to comment on Pyrrhus' own fall from grace—as the consequence of disingenuous machinations in the capital. But we have also seen that the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu also contains two separate apologies for the patriarch Cyrus: first, the Constantinopolitan source, emphasising Cyrus' opposition to the scourges of Martina and Heraclonas (Philagrius, Valentine); and, second, the pre-existent narrative of the *Chronicle*, which inverts his allegiances in the capital, and which has as the villains of its narrative the patriarch's enemies in Alexandria (Domentianus, Eudocianus).

Does this apologetic tone of these Alexandrian sections provide a crucial clue to the riddle of the text's earliest production? Is it probable that John of Nikiu—a miaphysite bishop close to the patriarch—could himself have written such a text? Should we not instead regard him as operating from a pre-existent source, imposing the lacuna and adding certain glosses so as to cast Cyrus in his classic role as persecutor? This seems to

210. Irrespective of the identity of the editor, note the significant fact that a historian in early Islamic Egypt still considered it worthwhile to update John of Nikiu's text so as to provide an account of much earlier affairs in the distant Roman capital; *contra* the association of the text with a radical reduction in post-conquest cultural horizons in e.g. CARRIÉ 2003.

211. See e.g. SPECK 1988, p. 510.

212. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, pp. 248–9 (although cf. p. 183 n. 71, which suggests that John of Nikiu draws upon “the second continuation of John of Antioch” i.e. what I have called the *History to 641*).

me the most probable scenario. But it is not impossible that John of Nikiu had a far less hostile perspective on Cyrus than that which we presume on the basis of other, extant Coptic texts. Not least, one of John's predecessors as bishop of Nikiu, another Cyrus, had been a crucial figure, from the Severan side, in the union of 633.²¹³

Whatever the solution to this dilemma, Nicephorus and the *Chronicle* provide an invaluable, but little appreciated, witness to the rival narratives and apologies which were being generated in (ex)patriarchal circles in the reign of Constans II. The reasons for this remarkable production are not difficult to surmise. In the late reign of Heraclius, the recall and exile of Cyrus had marked a decisive shift in the capital's approach to two inter-related issues: first, the attempt to propitiate the Muslims, and prevent their further expansion, through expensive payments of tribute; and, second, the unionist initiative amongst the anti-Chalcedonians, which had caused such consternation in certain Chalcedonian circles, and which some, no doubt, conceived as the proximate cause of Roman defeats. During the brief reign of Heraclonas, however, the emperor and his mother Martina had reversed these policies, and attempted both to re-establish peace with the nascent caliphate, and to renew the union with the moderate, Severan miaphysites of Alexandria, at the same moment that the Muslims were establishing their dominion in Middle Egypt and the southern Delta. Although Cyrus was able to fulfil his imperial commission—to negotiate with 'Amr and renew his commitment to the Severans—the simultaneous succession of Constans in late 641 marked the effective end of the policies of which he had been the champion: under the leadership of Valentine, the empire returned to a more aggressive footing; and under the aegis of the new Constantinopolitan patriarch Paul, efforts to reach out to the Chalcedonian critics of monenergism were once again renewed (even as the grounds for such criticism shifted towards the monothelete formula contained within the *Ekthesis*). As the Muslims' creeping conquest of the Nile Delta cemented their grip on the former Roman East, and as the anti-Chalcedonian churches disappeared beyond the Roman horizon, the policies of the 630s no doubt looked naïve, perhaps even destructive, and a chorus of religious criticism grew, in particular within the West.²¹⁴

In this context, the circles of Martina's ecclesiastical allies began to produce apologies for their heroes' actions: the *History to 641* critiqued the deposition of the patriarch Pyrrhus, while distancing him from his erstwhile imperial patrons; the *Chronicle's* Constantinopolitan source described the guileful machinations through which Cyrus' enemies had brought him and his allies low; and, most striking of all, the earlier narrative of the *Chronicle*, which perhaps derives from a more extensive source, blamed the Muslim conquest not on the patriarch's unions, but rather on the persecutions realised in his absence. The apologetic nature of these narratives, and the sometimes conflicting information offered within them, should caution us against an over-investment in the picture which each on its own presents, and we must suppose that the political alliances described were far more complex, diverse, and ephemeral than the evidence allows. But

213. See *History of the patriarchs (Vulgate recension)*, "Benjamin" (ed. Evetts I p. 491).

214. For the beginnings of this, see the ire aimed at Pyrrhus, and the demands made for his anathematisation and the removal of his honorifics, in Pope Theodore, *Letter to Constans II* (extant in Karshuni and transl. SCHACHT 1936, pp. 246–9); ID., *Letter to the bishops who consecrated Paul Patriarch of Constantinople, in place of Pyrrhus, ex-patriarch* (PL 87 col. 81–2, at 81B–82D). Both these date to soon after Theodore's election in November 642 (*Book of pontiffs* 75).

the same narratives also make clear that the conflicts as described were not founded in simple personal rivalries or the blind aspiration to power. They were also based in fiscal and strategic concerns regarding the renewal of tribute and of peace; and religious anxieties regarding the (re-)admittance to communion of perceived heretics. In this haze of polemics and apologetics, with all of its focus on a polarised cast of high-profile personalities, it is all too easy to lose sight of the substantive issues at stake. But the violent fluctuations in fortune which characterised the last years of the patriarch Cyrus were indicative of far more than the rise and fall of different emperors in the turbulent months of 641. They were symptomatic of the ideological divisions which then racked the empire's elite, and of the desperate search for solutions to the irresistible rise of the new Islamic dawn.

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